THE

Ladies Calling

IN TWO PARTS.

By the Author of the WHOLE DUTY OF MAN, &c.

The ſecond Impreſsion.

Favor is deceitful, and Beauty is vain: but a Woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praiſed. Pr. 31.30.

At the THEATER in OXFORD.

M. DC. LXXIII.

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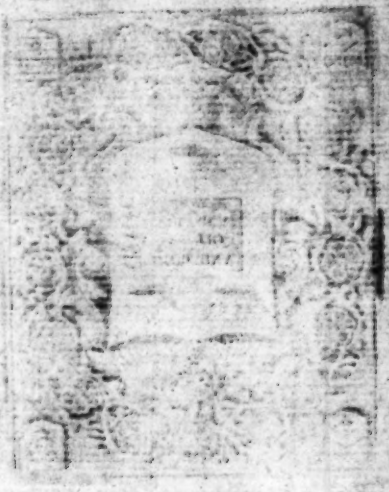

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The Editor To The Reader.

IT is a popular reproch usually cast upon writers in morality, and persuaders to devotion, that while they with pompous words represent vertu as a sufficient reward to her self, and exhort to the contemt of Glory; they prefix their names to their labors, and make the Title-page a confutation of the Book that follows it.

Our Author has effectually averted this objection, having bin so far from seeking a name from others, as not to have left a possibility for the discovery of his own: but like the river Nilus that gives fertility and blessing whereso're he passes, hides his head; and permits himself to be only known in the benefits which he dispenses.

By what methods the other most useful works of this excellent Author have stoln themselves into the world, I am not enabled to relate; but having bin made a party to the publication of this present, it may be expected that I render some account thereof. For altho the curiosity of enquiring into that which is industriously conceled, be such a rudeness, and injustice also, as by no means deserves to be encouraged, yet where a benefit has bin receiv'd, for those who are oblig'd, to desire to acquaint

acquaint themselves with the Person unto whom they stand endebted; that they may pay a respect at least, if they can reach at no more equal retribution; this has such a pretence to gratitude, as may justly demand to be considered. And it will be some satisfaction to the ingenuous enquirer, that tho he have not enform'd himself in the particulars which he desires, he has not bin deficient in the inquest, and knows as much as is possible.

The Reader therefore may please to understand, that somwhat more then two months since, I receiv'd a Letter, accompanied with a roul of Papers, opening the which, I found it was written by a hand which I was utterly a stranger to, and that had no name subscribed, the purport thereof was as follows.

SIR,

THegeneral report of your candor persuades me you will not reject an addres tho from an unknown hand; which encourages me to the sending these Papers to you, with a desire you would please to peruse them, and commit them either to the Press, or the Fire as you find them worthy. I shall not need to tell you who I am, for if my suit be accepted, I have what I desire without it: if it be not, tis my interest you should not know who tis that has thus importun'd you. Your Charity I assure my self will at a venture pardon

SIR,

Your humble Servant.

It will be superfluous to say how much I was surpriz'd with this so unusual address, how much affected with the singular modesty and humility which it expresst: and after all how much transported upon viewing the Treasure, which was thus as from the Clouds dropt into my hands. Nor was I long to determine which of the two waies of disposal proposed unto me, was to be made use of: and indeed I should much sooner have perform'd my trust, and taken care that this excellent Tract had immediatly seen the light, had it not bin needful to transcribe the whole, before it could safely be committed to the Press.

This I mention, not only to excuse the delay of the Edition, but more especially to beg a pardon for the misadventures of it. It being not easy in a written Copie where a recourse is not to be had unto the Author, to do him justice; and avoid faileurs and mistakes: which in the present instance was the more hazardous, in that every departure from the Authors inimitable pattern, would certainly be for the Worse.

But Excuse and complement are any where a very insipid fooliſh thing, and most intolerable in a serious concern: I shall not therefore say ought that looks that way; only offer a short request, which I suppose will be equally in the behalf of the Author of this Tract, the Editor, and the Readers of it. Which is, that whoever takes this book in hand would seriously consider it; and doing so, receive the infinite benefits of uniform

vertu,

vertu, and sincere piety; the documents whereof, are here with all possible advantages propos'd: and thereby give the Author, that greatest of blessings, the being an instrument to the eternal happiness of souls: and as to us who deal in the affair of Printing, afford some share in this most desirable event, absolving us from the Charge of having don mischief, instead of service to the world. For, to say the truth, no book is so fatally destructive as that which convinces of duty, but fails of persuading to it. And if the best books can do harm, 'twil certainly be difficult to make a plea for the multitudes of a contrary kind, which now especially usurp upon the Age.

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THE PREFACE.

THO the smalness of this Tract will scarce justifie the solemnity of a Preface; yet remembring 'tis design'd for those who are accustomed to Ceremonious Addresses, I think it not best to approch them too abruptly. And indeed besides the Civility, there seems som use of it in order to my design. To advise, or reprove, is so ungrateful an Office, that he that under-

undertakes it, had need use all previous arts to vindicate the sincerity of his purpose, and to convince the person admonished, that 'tis neither spleen nor prejudice, but the most real exuberant kindness which promts him to inflict those wounds of a friend, *Prov.* 27. 6. *and that he is never less* an enemy, then when he thus tells them the truth, *Gal.* 4. 16. *Therefore, tho they may in the ensuing leaves meet with som things which may have a shew of severity, yet let me assure my Reader, they have indeed a design of the greatest service, by correcting the extravagance of som, to rescu the whole Sex, as from the contagion of the example, so from the community of the blame. For such is either the inadvertence, or malice of a great part of mankind, that (against all Rules of Discourse) they deduce Generals from Particulars, make every woman so far an Eve, that her depravation shall forfeit her whole kind; and because there are foolish and scandalous*

women,

women, will scarce allow there are any other.

The truth is, the Error seems in many men to be affected; they propose to themselves unworthy ends on women, and make all their observations wholly in order to those. He that is upon a base pursuit, takes particular notice of all that he thinks for his turn; the rest fall not within his Sphere: and 'tis too probable he is so abundantly supplied for that absolute consideration, that he never descends to the comparative. Nay, perhaps there may be a yet deeper original of the scandal: the World is much governed by estimation; and as applause encourages and exalts, so an universal contemt debases and dejects the Spirit. If it can once pass into a Maxim, that women are such silly or vicious creatures, it may put fair for the making them so indeed. Themselves may imbibe the common opinion, charge all their personal faults on their Sex, think that they do but their kind, when indeed they most contradict

it, and no more aſpire to any thing worthy, then a man can pretend to the excellencies of an Angel. And indeed this ſeems to be the practical inference of ſom women, who could hardly have deſcended to ſuch diſhonors, had they not before bin as vile in their own eies, as they have afterwards rendred themſelves in others.

It may therefore upon this account be a neceſſary Charity to the Sex, to acquaint them with their own valu, animate them to ſom higher thoughts of themſelves; not to yield their ſuffrage to thoſe injurious eſtimates the World hath made of them, and from a ſuppoſed incapacity of nobler things to neglect the purſuit of them; from which God and Nature have no more precluded the Feminine, then the Maſculine part of mankind.

In reference to ſecular Conſiderations, their advantages are moſt important; Women have a very powerful Influence upon

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on all ſorts of Tranſactions in the World: the engaging of the Delilah, *and* plowing with the Heifer, *Judg.* 14. *&* 16. *being ever the ſureſt way to undermine the Counſels, and maſter the force of the Stouteſt* Samſon. *And accordingly, Hiſtories of all kinds aſſure us, that the* Gyneceum *has ſtill had a Rival ſuffrage with the Senate. I might urge the more regular Powers which appertain unto that Sex; that all mankind is the Pupil and Diſciple of Female Inſtitution: the Daughters till they write Women, and the Sons till the firſt ſeven years be paſt; the time when the mind is moſt ductile, and prepar'd to receive impreſſion, being wholly in the Care and Conduct of the Mother. And whereas 'tis obſerv'd by* Ariſtotle *in his Politics, (and is a proof of his being as wiſe, as he was a learned man) that the Eſtate of Republics entirely hangs on private Families, the little Monarchies both compoſing and giving law unto the great. 'Tis evi-*

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dent that the disposal of Families and all Domestic concerns therein lies chiefly on the Wife; whence the same Aristotle *declares, that the Spartans notwithstanding their ready address to Empire by their great frugality, industry, and military virtu, could have but half an happiness, as failing on the part of their Wives. But waving these reflexions, I shall fix only on the personal Accomplishments of the Sex, and peculiarly that which is the most principal endowment of the rational nature, I mean their understanding. Where first it will be a little hard to pronounce, that they are naturally inferior to men; when 'tis considered how much of extrinsic weight is put in the ballance to turn it on the mens side. Men have their parts cultivated and improved by Education, refined and subtilized by Learning and Arts, are like an inclosed piece of a Common, which by industry and husbandry becomes a different thing from the rest, tho the natural turf*

own'd

own'd no such inequality. And truly had women the same advantage, I dare not say but they would make as good returns of it; som of those few that have bin tried, have bin eminent in several parts of Learning. To omit the modern instances, Theano *after the death of* Pythagoras *kept up his School;* Socrates *confesses himself to have bin instructed not only in Rhetoric by* Aspatia, *but even in the highest Points of Philosophy by* Diotime; *the Roman Story informs us of the deep wisdom of* Tanaquil, Cornelia, Livia, *to pass by others. And were we sure they would have balast to their sails, have humility enough to poize them against the vanity of Learning, I see not why they might not more frequently be intrusted with it; for if they could be secured against this weed, doubtless the soil is rich enough to bear a good crop. But not to oppose a received opinion, let it be admitted, that in respect of their intellects they are*

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below men; yet sure in the sublimest part of humanity, they are their equals: they have souls of as divine an Original, as endless a Duration, and as capable of infinit Beatitude. That spiritual Essence, that ray of Divinity owns no distinction of Sexes; so that in this sense also, that Aphorism of the Apostle holds good, there is neither Male nor Female, but all are one, *Gal.* 3. 28. *And sure this is the one transcendent Excellency of Human Nature. For alas, what valu can comparatively be set upon all other Qualifications, which will finally leave us but like the Beasts that perish. And this, as it is the highest pitch of their worth, so it is the safest subject of their Contemplations: other Knowledg, as the Apostle speaks,* 1 *Cor.* 8. 1. may puff up, this only will edify.

As therefore when we would pride our selves, we use not to boast our meaner, but our best Qualities: so let me solicit Ladies to be so just to themselves, as not to take their

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own meſures by any thing below this. Why ſhould they take ſo low a level of Greatneſs, as to valu themſelves upon a title which is but a bigger blaſt of air, when they may derive their deſcent from above the Stars, claim cognation with Divinity? Why ſhould they dote on the fictitious image, of a perhaps more fictitious beauty, which their glaſs preſents them, when they need but look inward to ſee an infinitly fairer Idea, an emanation of the eternal Brightneſs? Indeed, did they make a juſt eſtimate of themſelves in this reſpect, it would overwhelm the vanity of thoſe inferior things wherein they now have ſuch complacency, nor would they ſuffer their nobler part to be affronted by the unequal competition of their meaner.

But there is alſo another conſequent which would flow from that eſteem, they would ſolicitouſly preſerve what they ſo highly prize, it being natural for us to proportion our care to our valu. They would be

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jealouſly vigilant againſt every thing, that might eclipſe the radiancy, or contaminate the purity of their ſouls. 'Twas the advice of an Heathen Moraliſt, Revere thy ſelf; *and 'twas very wholſom counſel: for next our due Veneration to God, a Reverence to our Selves is the moſt ſevere Controler of all Exorbitancies. How can a Soul that remembers its Celeſtial Extraction, wallow it ſelf in the mire, ſtoop to any ſordid degenerous practices? 'Tis ſaid of* Themiſtocles, *that ſeeing once a rich booty about the dead Corpſes of his enemies, he toucht it not, but pointing to another, ſaid, Take thou that, for thou art not Themiſtocles. If then a little military fame could ſo elevate his thoughts, 'tis a ſhame that any who carry an Immortal Spirit about them, ſhould not be raiſed above all the contemtible baits of this ſublunary World. Why ſhould they not with the like diſdain turn over all ſenſual Inordinancies to meer Animals, and Creatures that have no higher Principle then*

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that of ſenſe, whilſt themſelves ſoar up to thoſe more ſublimated pleſures, which are at God's Right Hand for evermore, *Pſal.* 16. 12.

We may therefore conclude, that what ever vicious impotence Women are under, it is acquired, not natural; nor derived from any illiberality of Gods, but from the ill managery of his bounty. He has placed within them a Pillar of Cloud and Fire, ſufficient to ſhelter and conduct them through all the ſtorms, all the intricacies that can occur in their journy to Canaan; *if they will forget that more intrinſic part of their being, live as if they were all body, reject the Manna, and rave after the Quails, that deſtruction which will thereby be induced they muſt own to ſpring from themſelves. Let them not charge God fooliſhly, or think that by making them women, he neceſſitated them to be proud, or wanton, vain, or peeviſh; ſince 'tis manifeſt he made them to better purpoſes, was not par-*

tial to the other Sex, but that having, as the Prophet ſpeaks, abundance of ſpirit, *Mal. 2. he equally diſpenc'd it, and gave the feebleſt woman as large and capacious a ſoul as that of the Greateſt Hero.*

Nay give me leave to ſay farther, that as to an Eternal well being, he ſeems to have placed them in more advantagious circumſtances then he has don men. He has implanted in them ſom native propenſions, which (as I ſhall hereafter have occaſion to obſerve) do much facilitate the operations of Grace upon them. Beſides, there are many temtations to which men are expoſed that are out of their road. How hard is it for a man to converſe in the World, but he ſhall be importun'd to debauchery and exceſs, muſt forfeit his ſobriety to maintain the reputation of a ſociable Perſon? Again, how liable are they by a promiſcuous converſation among variety of humors, to meet with affronts, which the Maxims of Honor will tell them, muſt (in ſpight of all

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Christ's interdicts) be reveng'd? And this engages them in Quarrels, somtimes in Murders. Now none of these are incident to women: they must in these and som other instances attaque temtation, violently ravish guilt, and abandon their Sex, the whole Economy of their state, e're they can divest themselves of their innocency. So that God seems in many particulars to have closelier fenced them in, and not left them to those wilder excursions, for which the customary liberties of the other Sex afford a more open way. In short, they have so many advantages towards Vertu, that tho the Philosopher made it one of his solemn acknowledgments to God, that he had made him a man, not a woman: yet I think Christian women have now reason enough to invert that form, and to thank God that he made them women, and not men.

But we know advantages which are only in speculation, are lookt on with som diffidence, till there have bin som practical experiment

riment made of them; I shall therefore evidence the problem by demonstration, and instance; desiring my Readers to mesure the possibilities of their arriving to eminent degrees of Vertu and Piety, by what others have attained to. I shall not fetch examples of Morality from Heathen Women, because I am now upon an higher strain; (yet many such might be brought to the reproch of many Women, who pretending to more, fall infinitly short of that:) 'tis Christian Vertu that I am now recommending, and which has bin eminently exemplified in many of their Sex. How many Women do we read of in the Gospel, who in all the duties of assiduous attendance on Christ, liberalities of love and respect, nay even in zeal and courage, surpassed even the Apostles themselves? We find his Cross surrounded, his Passion celebrated by the avowed tears and lamentations of devout Women, when the most sanguine of his Disciples had denied, yea forswore, and all had forsaken him. Nay,

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even Death it self could not extinguish their love; we find the devout Maries *designing a laborious, chargeable, and perhaps hazardous respect to his Corps. And accordingly, 'tis a memorable attestation Christ gives to their Piety, by making them the first witnesses of his Resurrection, the prime Evangelists to Proclaim those glad Tidings; & as a Learned man speaks, Apostles to the Apostles. Nor is the devotion of that Sex to be found only in the sacred Records; the Primitive times have left us many Memorials of the like, and the Martyrologies are full of Female sufferers of all ages and conditions, who by the fervor of their Zeal had overcome the timorousness of their Nature, and wearied the cruelty of their Persecutors. And as Women help to augment the number of Martyrs, so did they of Confessors also, in a stout owning, and diligent practice of Christianity. Queens and Empresses knew then no Title so Glorious as that of a nursing Mother to the Church, have often exchan-*

exchanged their Palaces for little Cells and Oratories, and valued not their own Diadems in comparison with their Savior's Crown of Thorns. And tho by a perpetual declination from that pristine Zeal, the instances have in every Age grown less numerous, yet none has wanted som very illustrious Examples. Nay even in our dregs of time, in this common decay of all good, there are, I doubt not, many who (according to their opportunities) transcribe the former Copies, live like People that know they must live hereafter, and present us yet with som specimen of ancient Vertu. Nay, to speak an impartial Truth, 'tis not to be denied, but the reputation of Religion is more kept up by women then men; many of the one countenancing it by their Practice, whereas more of the other do not only neglect, but decry it. And now since Women are compassed about with so great a cloud of Witnesses, who by doing the thing, give the surest evidence that 'tis not unfea-

sible,

ſible, why ſhould any plead an impoſſibility? In matters of Vanity and Pomp they are not ſo eaſily diſheartened, no pattern of that kind can be ſet which will not be induſtriouſly imitated; nay in the greateſt inequality of materials for it. Why then ſhould their emulation leave them where only it could do them good? How comes it, that of thoſe who have equal Principles of a ſpiritual Being, ſom live according to the Dignity of it; and others who ſee them do ſo, do yet live as if they aſſented to that Philoſophers Paradox, who ſaid Women had no ſouls; or at leaſt were of the Pythagorian Sect, and lookt upon themſelves only as the Jails and Priſons of former offending Spirits, which they reſolved to fit for a yet viler tranſmigration; give them the appetites of Beaſts before they aſſume the Bodies? This is indeed an unlucky Humility, that thoſe who in all other inſtances are apt to overween, ſhould here ſink ſo much below themſelves. And I hope 'twill not appear an uncivil

uncivil addreſs, to perſwade them to a juſter eſtimate of their own worth. And if what has bin ſaid to that end may have any effect, I ſhall not deſire a better Preparative to the enſuing Tract; ſince ſhe that duly conſiders her own capacity of Eternal Bliſs, and withal, the poſſibility of as Endleſs a Miſery, according as ſhe performs or neglects the ſeveral Parts of Duty, will ſure need no other incentive to the diligent Purſuit of it.

THE

THE LADIES CALLING.

PART I. SECT. I.

Of Modesty.

1. IT is now many years since an Address was made to the Gentry of this Nation, to perswade them to that Vertu which would be both their Plesure and Reward. I cannot, I confess, boast any such Effect of that, as should much inspirit the hopes of a new Attemt; yet since we see in our proper secular Concerns, Defeats do many times animate no less then Success, I know not why in this more charitable Design I should sit down discouraged. Men usually raise not a Siege

upon the first repulse, but reinforce their Batteries, observe more curiously which are the most assailable, accessible parts, and accordingly dispose their Assault: It will then be no unreasonable imitation in the present case, if after a successless Attemt upon the more impregnable Masculine part of the Gentry, I now essay the Feminine, whose native Softness and Gentleness may render them less apt for that resistance of good Counsel, wherein too many Men place their Gallantry.

I presume those to whom that little Tract was at first design'd, will be so willing to relinquish their Title, that I might without imputation of Robbery, exchange my Patrons, and by a new Dedication supersede the labor of a new Book. And indeed, since what was there said was founded more on the distinction of Qualities then of Sex, there would not need many razures to render it as proper for the one as the other; and I shall take so much advantage of it, as to assure the Female Gentry, that they may there find much of the Duty incumbent on them, in respect of that Rank and Condition they hold in the World: and therefore, tho *I* shall sometimes make som reflexions on it; yet, as to the main, *I* shall think it the easiest course, as well for them as my self, to direct them thither.

3. BUT it may seem to have too much of the Pedant, to entertain new Scholars only with the cast or nauseated learning of the old; and when I remember *I* write to Ladies, who use to think the new-

newness of any thing a considerable Addition to its valu; I conceive my self oblig'd as well in Civility to their humor, as Charity to their needs, to give them something which they may own as their peculiar. And to render it the more unalienable, I shall affix it to their Sex; and make it the Subject of my present inquisition, what in respect of that, are the proper and distinct Obligations, under which, by the assignment of God and Nature, they are placed.

4. THAT the Obligation to Moral and Christian Vertues is in it self universal, and not confin'd to any Sex or Person, is not to be denied: yet, as in human Constitutions there are often Precepts, which (tho not exclusive of any, do yet) more peculiarly and eminently level at som particular Rank or Order of Men; so in the Laws of God and Nature, there appears the like distinction. That All-Wise Creator, who hath put peculiar Proprieties and Inclinations into his Creatures, hath accordingly design'd their actuating and improving them: and altho in mankind, which differs not in species but in gender, the variety may seem less; yet there is still enough to found som diversity, either in the kind or degree of duty. This sure is shadowed to us in that particular caution given to the Jews, not to confound the habit of the several Sexes, *Deut.* 22. 5. and yet more clearly evinced in the Precept which the Apostles address to women, 1 *Tim.* 2. and 1 *Pet.* 3. Nay, this is so granted a Truth, that all Ages and Nations

have made ſom diſtinction between Maſculine and Feminine Vertues, Nature having not only given a diſtinction as to the Beauties of their outward Form, but alſo in their very mold and conſtitution implanted peculiar Aptneſſes and Proprieties of Mind, which accordingly vary the meſure of Decency; that being comely for the one Sex, which often is not (at leaſt in the ſame degree) for the other. It will therefore be no abſurd attemt to decipher thoſe Excellencies, which are the genuine and proper Ornaments of Women: which tho in ſom inſtances they may perhaps prove coincident with thoſe of Men; yet even thoſe which are equally incluſive of both, by the Divine command may have ſom additional weight on the Female ſide, in reſpect of Decency, Fame, or ſom other (not deſpiſable) conſideration.

5. For the better directing our preſent Inquiſition, it will be moſt regular, firſt to inquire what thoſe Vertues are which are univerſally neceſſary to Women in all Ages and circumſtances of their lives: ſuch which, like the firſt matter, are prerequir'd for all forms; which, like a firm and ſolid Baſis, muſt ſupport all various Events, all changes of their Condition or Relations. And ſecondly, we ſhall conſider them in thoſe changes; track them thro the ſeveral Stages and Periods of Life, thro thoſe ſeveral States which create the moſt conſiderable mutations to them; and in each of thoſe conſider what are the new and proportionate Acceſſions of Duty.

6. As

6. As in the outward Accommodations of Life, the things of most daily and indispensible use deserve the greatest Valu; so in Moral or Divine Endowments, the benefit of possessing is best measured by the misery of wanting them. This first rank therefore of Female Vertues which we are to treat of, will have that to recommend them; they being so strictly necessary, that their absence is not only a privative ill, but also exposes to a deluge of all positive mischiefs consequent to that privation.

7. This will be found true in all the severals we are to pass thro, but in none more eminently then in that we shall chuse to begin with, the Vertu of Modesty; which may be considered in a double notion, the one as it is opposed to Boldness and Indecency, the other to Lightness and Wantonness. In the first Acception *Zeno* has not ill defin'd it, to be *the Science of Decent Motion*, it being that which guides and regulates the whole Behavior, checks and controles all rude Exorbitancies, & is the great Civilizer of Conversations. It is indeed a Vertu of a general Influence; do's not only ballast the mind with sober and humble thoughts of ones self, but also steers every part of the outward frame. It appears in the face in calm and meek looks, where it so impresses it self, that it seems thence to have acquir'd the name of shamefac'dness. Certainly, (whatever the modern opinion is) there is nothing gives a greater luster to a Feminine Beauty: so that St. *Paul* seems not ill

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to have consulted their Concerns in that Point, when he substitutes that as a suppletory Ornament to *the deckings of Gold and Pearl and costly Array*, 1 *Tim.* 2. But *I* fear this now will be thought too antiquated a dress, and an Apostle be esteemed no competent Judg in this Science; which is now become so solemn a thing, that certainly no *Academy* in the World can vie numbers with the Students of this Mystery. Yet when they have strein'd their Art to the highest Pitch; an innocent Modesty, and native simplicity of Look, shall eclipse their Glaring Splendor, and triumph over their *Artificial* Handsomness: on the other side, let a Woman be decked with all the embellishments of *Art*, nay and care of Nature too, yet if Boldness be to be read in her Face, it blots all the lines of Beauty, is like a cloud over the Sun, intercepts the view of all that was otherwise *Amiable*, and renders its blackness the more observable, by being plac'd neer somwhat that was apt to attract the eyes.

8. BUT Modesty confines not its self to the Face, she is there only in shadow and effigie; but is in life and motion in the Words, whence she banishes all Indecency and Rudeness, all insolent Vauntings, and supercilious Disdains, and what ever else may render a Person troublesom, or ridiculous to the Company. Nor do's she only refine the Language, but she tunes it too, modulates the tone and accent, admits no unhandsom earnestness, or loudness of Discourse,

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the latter whereof was thought ſo undecent in *Carneades*, (tho in his public Lectures) that the Gymnaſiarch reproved him for it. And ſure if 'twere not allowable in a Philoſopher in his School, 'twill leſs become a woman in ordinary converſe; and if we conſult *Prov.* 7. 11. and 9. we ſhall find loudneſs and clamor in women coupled with ſuch other epithets, as will ſurely not much recommend it. A womans tongue ſhould indeed be like the imaginary Muſic of the Spheres, ſweet and charming, but not to be heard at diſtance.

9. AND as Modeſty preſcribes the manner, ſo it do's alſo the meſure of ſpeaking; reſtrains all exceſſive talkativeneſs, a fault incident to none but the bold; the monopolizing of Diſcourſe being one of the greateſt aſſumings imaginable, and ſo rude an impoſing upon the company, that there can ſcarce be a greater indecency in converſation. This is ingeniouſly expreſt by our Divine Poet *Herbert*,

A Civil Gueſt,
Will no more talk all, then eat all the Feaſt.

He that engroſſes the talk, enforces ſilence upon the reſt, & ſo is preſumed to look on them only as his Auditors and Pupils, whilſt he magiſteriouſly dictates to them: which gave occaſion to *Socrates* to ſay, *It is arrogance to ſpeak all, and to be willing to hear nothing.* It is indeed univerſally an inſolent unbecoming thing, but moſt peculiarly ſo in a woman.

10. THE

10. THE ancient Romans thought it ſo much ſo, that they allowed not that Sex to ſpeak publicly, tho it were in their own neceſſary defence; inſomuch that when *Ameſia* ſtood forth to plead her own cauſe in the Senate, they lookt on it as ſo prodigious a thing, that they ſent to conſult the Oracle what it portended to the State. And tho theſe firſt ſeverities were ſoon loſt in the ſucceſſes of that Empire, *Valerius Maximus* could find but two more, whoſe either neceſſity or impudence, perſwaded them to repete this unhanſom attemt.

11. AND this great indecency of Loquacity in Women, I am willing to hope is the reaſon why that Sex is ſo generally charged with it; not that they are all guilty, but that when they are, it appears ſo unhanſom, as makes it the more eminent and remarkable. Whether it were from that ungracefulneſs of the thing, or from the propenſion Women have to it, I ſhall not determin; but we find the Apoſtle very earneſt in his cautions againſt it, 1 *Cor.* 14.35. He expreſly enjoins Women to *keep ſilence in the Church*, where he affirms it a ſhame for them to ſpeak: and tho this ſeems only reſtrain'd to the Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies, yet even ſo it reaches home to the gifted Women of our age, who take upon them to be Teachers; whereas he allowed them not to ſpeak in the Church, no not in order to learning, tho a more modeſt deſign then that of teaching. But beſides this, he has a more indefinit preſcription of ſilence to Women, 1 *Tim.* 2. 11. *Let women learn in ſilence*;

lence; and again, v. 12. *to be in silence.* The Apostle seems to ground the Phrase, not only on the inferiority of the woman in regard of the creation and first sin, v. 13, 14. but also on the presumtion that they needed instruction, towards which, silence has alwaies bin reckoned an indispensible qualification, the introductory precept in all Schools, as that wherein all attention is founded. If som women of our age think they have outgon that novice state the Apostle supposes, and want no teaching; I must crave leave to believe, they want that very first Principle which should set them to learn, *viz.* the knowledg of their own ignorance: a science which so grows with study and consideration, that *Socrates* after a long life spent in pursuit of Wisdom, gave this as the sum of his learning, *This only I know, that I know nothing.* This proficiency seems much wanting to our female Talkers, who, in this, seem to confute the common Maxim, and give what they have not, by making their ignorance visible to others, tho it be undiscernable to themselves: and to such we may not unfitly apply the Sarcasm of *Zeno* to a talkative Youth; *their ears are faln into their tongue.*

12. But besides this assuming sort of talkativeness, there is another usually charged upon the Sex, a meer chatting, pratling humor, which maintains it self at the cost of their neighbors, and can never want supplies as long as there is any body within the reach of their observation.

This I would fain hope is most the vice of the vulgar sort of Women, the education of the Nobler setting them above those mean entertainments. Yet when 'tis remembred that St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 13. makes Tatling the effect of Idleness, it may not unreasonably be feared, that where there is most of the Cause, there will be som of the Effect. And indeed, it would puzzle one to conjecture, how that round of formal Visits among Persons of Quality should be kept up without this. That their Visits should be only a dumb Shew, none will suspect among women; and when the unfashionable themes of Houswifery, Piety, &c. are excluded, there will not remain many Topics of Discourse, unless this be called in to supply. And this indeed is a most inexhaustible reserve, it having so many springs to feed it, that 'tis scarce possible it should fail. And when 'tis farther considered, how apt a minister it is to Envy, Spleen, Revenge, and other feminine Passions, we cannot suppose it can be unacceptable where any of those bear sway. But I believe it is not more frequently introduc'd by any thing then the vanity of Wit, which has no where a more free and exorbitant range than in censuring and deriding; nay, finds not only Exercise but Triumph too, vain Persons seldom considering the Infirmities or Follies of others, without som Complacencies, and assuming reflections on themselves; which how unagreable it renders this liberty of talking to that Modesty we recommend, is obvious

vious enough. And would God 'twere only opposit to that; but it is no less so to all the Obligations of Justice and Charity also, which are scarce so frequently violated by any thing, as by this licentiousness of the tongue.

13, There is yet another vice of it, for which the female Sex has bin generally accus'd, and that is reveling of secrets: an infirmity presum'd so incident to them, that *Aristotle* is said to have made it one of the three things he solemnly repented of, that he had ever trusted a Secret with a Woman. But by how much the greater prejudice they lie under in this respect, the greater ought to be their caution to vindicate not only their Persons but their Sex, from the imputation, which is indeed extreamly reprochful: this blasting humor being a symptom of a loose, imporent soul, a kind of incontinence of the mind, that can retain nothing committed to it; but as if that also had its Diabetic passion, perpetually and almost insensibly evacuating all. And indeed however we are willing to appropriate this to the Sex, yet the fault is owing only to this ill constitution of the mind, which is oft-times no less visible in men; as on the contrary, those women who by reason and vertu have acquir'd a Solidity and Firmness of mind, are as sure repositories of a secret, as the most masculine confident: and such I have no intent to involve in this charge, but rather by proposing their example to the rest, shew that nature has put them under no fatal necessity of being

thus impotent. A ſecret is no ſuch unruly thing, but it may be kept in: they may take the Wiſe man's word for it, *Eccluſ.* 19. 10. *If thou haſt heard a word let it die with thee, and be bold, it will not burſt thee.*

14. THIS is a piece of daring manlineſs, which they may affect without breach of Modeſty; would God they would take it in exchange for that virile Boldneſs, which is now too common among many even of the beſt Rank. Such a degenerous age do we now live in, that every thing ſeems inverted, even Sexes; whilſt men fall to the Effeminacy and Niceneſs of women, and women take up the Confidence, the Boldneſs of men, and this too under the notion of good Breeding. A bluſh (tho formerly reputed the color of Vertu) is accounted worſe manners then thoſe things which ought to occaſion it, and ſuch as nothing but the ſimplicity of a Country Girl can excuſe. But the infirmity for the moſt part proves very corrigible; a few weeks of the Town Diſcipline wears off that piece of Ruſticity, and advances them to a modiſh Aſſurance. Nor is that deſign'd to terminate in it ſelf, but it is to carry them on, till they arrive to a perfect Metamorphoſis, their Geſture, their Language, nay ſomtimes their Habit too being affectedly maſculine; ſo that what *Tacitus* ſpeaks of *Vitellius* in relation to his being a Prince, we may apply to them, and ſay, that *if others did not remember them to be women, themſelves could eaſily forget it.*

15. YET

15. Yet were this affectation confin'd only to the more innocent indifferent things, 'twere more tolerable; but alas it extends farther, and there are women who think they have not made a sufficient escape from their sex, 'till they have assumed the Vices of men too. A sober modest Dialect is too effeminate for them: a blustring ranting stile is taken up, and (to shew them proficients in it) adorn'd with all the Oaths and Imprecations their memory or invention can supply: as if they meant to vindicate their sex from the imputation of Timerousness by daring God Almighty. 'Tis true indeed, an Oath sounds gratingly out of whatever mouth, but out of a womans it hath such an uncooth harshness, that there is no noise on this side Hell can be more amazingly odious; Yet this is a music this discordant age hath introduc'd, no former having I think ever heard it in places at all civiliz'd. So that the female swearers want that poor shadow of excuse the men pretend to, it having bin so far from customary, that the unwontedness could not but force them to som industry and pains, e're they could acquire the habit, and set up for female Hectors; an essay, wherein they have bin very kind to the masculine, by shewing the world there can be somthing worse.

16. 'Tis said there want not som who compleat the demonstration by the other parallel quality of Drinking also; a vice detestable in all, but prodigious in women, who put a double violence upon their nature, the one in the intemperance

rance, the other in the immodesty. And tho they may take their immediat copy from men, yet (to the praise of their proficiency) they ourdo their Exemplar and draw near the Original: nothing human being so much beast as a drunken woman. This is evident enough if we look only on the meer surface of the crime; but if we dive farther into its inferences and adherencies, the affirmation is yet more irrefragable. She who is first a prostitute to Wine, will soon be to Lust also: she has dismist her Guards, discarded all the suggestions of reason, as well as Grace; and is at the mercy of any, of every assailant. And when we consider how much fuller the world is of *Ammons* then *Josephs*, it will not be hard to guess the fate of that womans Chastity, which has no other bottom then that of mens. So that unless her vice secure her vertu, and the loathsomness of the one prevent attemts on the other, 'tis scarce imaginable a woman that loses her Sobriety should keep her Honesty. So that indeed I might more properly have made this reflection when I come to speak of Modesty in the second notion of it, as it is oppos'd to Lightness and Wantonness, but it falls not much amiss now, to be the introduction to it.

17. And if we consider Modesty in this sense, we shall find it the most indispensible requisite of a woman; a thing so essential and natural to the sex, that every the least declination from it, is a proportionable receding from Womanhood, but the

the total abandoning it ranks them among Brutes, nay sets them as far beneath those, as an acquir'd vileness is below a native. I need make no collection of the verdicts either of the Philosophers or Divines in the case, it being so much an instinct of nature, that tho too many make a shift to suppress it in themselves, yet they cannot so darken the notion in others, but that an Impudent woman is lookt on as a kind of Monster, a thing diverted and distorted from its proper form. That there is indeed a strange repugnancy to nature, needs no other evidence then the strugling, and difficulty in the first violations of Modesty, which alwaies begin with regrets and blushes, and require a great deal of Self-denial, much of vicious Fortitude, to encounter with the recoilings and upbraidings of their own minds.

18. I make no doubt but this age has arriv'd to as compendious arts of this kind, as industrious vice can suggest, and we have but too many instances of early proficients in this learning; yet I dare appeal even to the forwardest of them, whether at first they could not with more ease have kept their vertu then lost it. Certainly such are the Horrors and Shames that precede those first Guilts, that they must commit a rape upon themselves (force their own reluctancies and aversions) before they can become willing prostitutes to others. This their Seducers seem well to understand, and upon that score are at the pains of so many preparatory courtings, such expense of presents

presents too; as if this were so uncouth a crime, that there were no hope to introduce it but by a confederacy of som more familiar vices, their Pride or Covetousness.

19. THE best way therefore to countermine those Stratagems of men, is for women to be suspiciously vigilant even of the first approches. He that means to defend a Fort, must not abandon the Outworks, and she that will secure her Chastity, must never let it come to too close a siege, but repass the very first and most remote insinuations of a Temter. Therefore when we speak of Modesty in our present notion of it, we are not to oppose it only to the grosser act of Incontinency, but to all those misbehaviors, which either discover or may create an inclination to it; of which sort is all Lightness of carriage, wanton glances, obscene discourse; things that shew a Woman so weary of her honor, that the next comer may reasonably expect a surrender, and consequently be invited to the Assault. Indeed they are such, that one would rather think them the result of many acts, then meerly the Prologue to one; and yet nothing but a custom of private sin, could supply impudence enough to do what is so publicly scandalous; and where this is found in those of any considerable age, charity it self can scarce pass a milder censure. Yet possibly in those of the youngest sort, they may at first be taken up (as their dress is) meerly in imitation of others, embrac'd implicitly upon the autority of

of those, whose examples govern the modes. When a poor girle, who has still so much of the child as to admire every thing that glitters, sees these things used by the gay people of the world, 'tis no wonder if she take these as part of their accomplishments, and upon peril of that formidable calamity of being unfashionable, conform to them. Which yet do's not so much extenuate the guilt of those few seduced persons, as it aggravates that of the Seducers, and attests the strange corruption of the age, that those things which the less hardened sort of prostitutes were formerly ashamed of, should now pass into the frequency and avowedness of a fashion, become a part of Discipline and Institution of youth: as if vice now disdain'd to have any punies in its school, and therefore by a preposterous anticipation, makes its pupils begin where they were wont to end, initiates them at first into that shamelessness, which was wont to be the product only of a long habit. What the end will be of these Piqueerers in impudence, who thus put their vertu on the forlorn hope, is easie to divine. Yet is not this the only state of danger: they who keep their ranks, and tho they do not provoke assaults, yet stay to receive them, may be far enough from safety. She that lends a patient ear to the praises of her Wit or Beauty, intends at first perhaps only to gratify her vanity; but when she is once charm'd with that Sirens song, bewitcht with that Flattery, she insensibly declines to a kindness for that person that

values her so much. And when that spark shall be blow'd up by perpetual remonstrances of Passion, and perhaps a little Romantique artifices of pretending to die for her, with a thousand other tricks, which Lust can suggest, 'twill like the *Naptha* Naturalists speak of, in a moment grow to an unquenchable flame, to the ruin both of her Vertu and Honor.

20. LET no woman therefore presume upon the innocence of her first intentions; she may as well upon confidence of a sound constitution, enter a pest-house and converse with the plague, whose contagion do's not more subtily insinuate it self, then this sort of temtation. And as in that case she would not stay to define what were the critical distance, at which she might approch with safety, but would run as far from it as she could; so in this, it no less concerns her, to remove her self from the possibility of danger, and (how unfashionable soever it be) to put on such a severe Modesty, that her very looks should guard her, and discourage the most impudent assailant. 'Tis said of *Philopemen*, that the *Lacedemonians* finding it their interest to corrupt him with mony, they were yet so possest with the reverence of his vertues, that none durst undertake to attaque him; and sure 'twere not impossible for women to arrive at the same security. Such an autority there is in Vertu, that where 'tis eminent, 'tis apt to controle all loose desires, and he must not be only lustful but sacrilegious, that attemts to violate such a Sanctuary.

21. BUT

21. BUT perhaps that sex may fear, that by putting on such a Strictness, they shall loose the glory of their Beauty, which is now chiefly estimated by the number of those who court and adore them. To this in the first place I must say, that they are miserable Trophies to Beauty that must be built on the ruins of Vertu and Honor; and she that to boast the length of her hair should hang her self in it, would but act the same folly in a lower instance.

22. BUT then secondly, 'tis a great mistake to think their Beauty shall be the less prized, since 'tis incident to mans nature to esteem those things most that are at a distance, whereas an easie and cheap descent begets contemt. So long as they govern themselves by the exact rules of Prudence and Modesty, their luster is like the Meridian Sun in its clearness, which tho less approchable, is counted more glorious; but when they decline from those, they are like that Sun in a cloud, which tho safelier gazed on, is not half so bright. But besides these collateral advantages, 'tis certain that Modesty gives an immediat and direct improvement to Beauty; for tho men for their own vicious ends wish them severd, yet they cannot but think they are the most amiable when united, and you shall hear them often commend the aspect of that Modesty, which they would fain circumvent.

23. BUT in the 3d place, there is nothing but such a Reservedness that can indeed make their Beau-

ty triumphant. Parly and conqueſt are the moſt diſtant things, and ſhe that deſcends to treat with an aſſailant, whatever he may tell her of his being her captive, 'tis but in order to the making her his; which when ſhe once is, there is no ſtate of ſervitude half ſo wretched, nothing in the world being ſo ſlaviſhly abject as a proſtitute woman. For beſides all the intereſt of another life which ſhe baſely reſigns, ſhe ſacrifices all that is valuable in this: her reputation ſhe puts wholly in his power that has debauched her, and which is worſe her reformation too. If ſhe ſhould have a mind to return to vertu, ſhe dares not for fear he ſhould divulge her former ſtrayings from it: ſo that, like *Catiline*, ſhe is engag'd to future evils to ſecure the paſt. Yea ſhe ſubjects her ſelf not only to his luſt, but to all his humors and fancies, nay even to all thoſe who have bin inſtrumental to their privacies, none of them all being to be diſpleas'd for fear of blabbing. And when 'tis remembred, what a ſort of cattel they are, which are the engines in ſuch affairs, there can ſcarce be any thing more deplorable then to be within their laſh. 'Tis true indeed, ſom have found a way to cure this uneaſineſs by being their own delators, not only confeſſing but boaſting their crime, and by an impudent owning prevent all accuſations: yet even this ſerves but to atteſt the intolerableneſs of the former condition, when this worſt of miſchiefs is choſe as a reſcu. Their impatience of being alwaies in aw, makes them take up that reſolution

for

for infamy, which *Cæsar* did for death, who said 'twas better to die once then to be alwaies in fear. And tho this desperate remedy may cure the fear, yet it ascertains the reproch; for whereas in the impeachment of others there is place for doubt, and charity may promt som to disbelieve it, yet when the fact is justified by the offender, the evidence is uncontrolable, and withal doubles the infamy. For besides that which adheres to the crime, there is a distinct portion due to the impudence; yet, like the Scorpion, it must cure its own sting, and tho it increases the obloquy, yet it deadens the sense of it.

24. But when they have thus steel'd their forheads against all impressions of Shame, they are still liable to many other painful effects of their sin. What fears of being abandoned, what jealousies of rivals do often torture them? And indeed not without ground: for they cannot but know, that the same humor of variety which engaged their Paramors in their love, may do the same for another, and another, and so on; it being as possible to grasp the air, as to confine a wandring lust. Besides, what anxious apprehensions have they of the approch of age, which they are sure will render them loathed and despicable, as also of all intermedial decaies of Beauty? How critically do they examin their glass? and every wrinkle that represents in their face, becomes a deep gash in the heart. But if they have at any time the lesure (or indeed the courage) to look

look inward, the view is yet more dreadful, a deform'd soul, spoild of its innocence, and rendred almost as brutish as the sin it has consented to. But tho it be in som respects *like the beast that perisheth*, it is not, it cannot be in that which would most avail it; an endless being it cannot lose, nor can it expect any thing from that preeminence of its nature, but an infinity of misery. This is such an amazing contemplation, as, methinks, were it insisted on, should allay the hottest blood; no impure flames being so fierce as to contest with those of unquenchable fire. It is therefore tho a very impious, yet no unskilful artifice of those who would vitiate women in their Manners, to corrupt them in their Principles, and by extinguishing all hopes or fears of another World, perswade them to immerse boldly into all the abominations of this. 'Tis said, this is now an art of wooing, the modern preludium to the basest proposals. It seems this age dares not trust only to the former waies of seducement, fears there will not be women enough that will forget the interests of another World; and therefore is fain to set up a new party of others to disbelieve it. And I fear that design has bin too prosperous; many women are so much more concerned for their bodies then their souls, that they are contented the one should be elevated upon the depression and debasement of the other; and whilst with a vain transport, they can hear their outward form applauded, as Angelical, or Divine,

they

they can very tamely endure to have their better part vilified and despised, desin'd to be only a puff of air in their nostrils, which will scatter with their expiring breath, or in the Atheists phrase, *Wisd.* 6. 6. *vanish as the soft air.* Whereas they should consider, that they who preach this Doctrin to them, design it only to infer a pernicious Use. 'Tis a Maxim in Politics, that those counsels are suspiciously to be scan'd, which carry in their front the advisers interest; which certainly is never more visible then in this case, he that once gains this point, never needing to contest for all the rest. For he that can perswade a woman out of her soul, will soon command her body; and then what was at first his interest, becomes hers at last; and her wishes of the mortality of her soul, are much stronger then 'tis possible her belief of it could be: which confirms abundantly my affirmation of the servile, wretched condition of such a person. For if we judg that a very severe slavery which makes people desirous to resign a temporal being, what shall we think of that which provokes them to renounce an eternal?

25. And now by this gradation of mischiefs we may judg of the deplorable state of those who have abandoned their Vertu; wherein I doubt not the consciences of many cannot only arrest, but much improve the description; and all I shall say to such, is, only to consult that bosom monitor, which till they do, all Homilies will be insignificant. My design was not therefore to tell them what

what they too well feel, but only to point out their wracks as warnings to others.

26. LET all those therefore who are yet untainted, and by being so, have their judgments clear and unbiast, consider soberly the misery of the other condition, and that not only to applaud, but secure their own; and when ever the outward pomps and gaudy splendors of a vitiated woman seem, like that of *Cresus*, to boast their happiness, let them look thro that Fallacy, and answer with *Solon, that those only are happy who are so at their end.* Their most exquisit deckings are but like the garlands on a beast design'd for Sacrifice; their richest gems are but the chains, not of their ornament but slavery; and their gorgeous apparel, like that of *Herod*, covers perhaps a putrid body, (for even that doth not seldom prove their fate) or however, a more putrid soul. They who can thus consider them, will avoid one great snare; for 'tis not alwaies so much the lust of the flesh, as that of the eies which betraies a woman. 'Tis the known infirmity of the Sex, to love gaiety, and a splendid appearance, which renders all temtations of that sort so connatural to them, that those who are not arrived to a more sober estimate of things, will scarce be secure. It will therefore be necessary for them to regulate their opinions, and reduce all such things to their just valu, and then they will appear so trifling, that they can never maintain any competition with the more solid interests of

of Vertu and Honor. For tho those terms seem in this loose age to be exploded; yet where the things are visible they extort a secret veneration, even from those who think it their concern publicly to deride them: whereas on the other side a defection from them exposes to all the contempt imaginable, renders them despis'd even by those who betraid them to it, leaves a perpetual blot upon their Names, and their Family. For in the character of a woman, let Wit and Beauty, and all female accomplishments stand in the front; yet if wantonness bring up the rear, the Satyr soon devours the Panegyric, and (as in an Echo) the last words only will reverberate, and her vice will be remembred when all the rest will be forgot. But I need not declame upon this theme; the Son of *Syrach* has done it to my hand, in many passages, but especially *Eccluſ.* 23. to which I refer the Reader.

32. What hath bin already said, is, I suppose, sufficient to convince every woman how much it is her concern to keep her self strictly within the bounds of Modesty and Vertu. In order to which, there is nothing more important then a judicious choice of their Company; I mean not only for men, but women also. Vice is contagious, and this especially has that worst quality of the Plague, that 'tis malicious, and would infect others. A woman that knows her self scandalous, thinks she is reprocht by the vertu of another, looks on her as one that is *made to reprove her waies*, as it is, *Wisd.* 2. 14. and therefore in her own defence

ſtrives to level the inequality, not by reforming her ſelf, (that ſhe thinks too hard a task) but by corrupting the other. To this end, ſuch are willing to ſcrew themſelves into an acquaintance, will be officiouſly kind, and by all arts of condeſcention and obliging, endevor to enſnare a woman of reputation into their intimacy. And if they ſucceed, if they can but once entangle her into that cobweb-friendſhip; they then, ſpider-like, infuſe their venom, never leave their vile inſinuations till they have poiſoned and ruined her. But and if on the other ſide they meet with one of too much ſagacity to be ſo entrapped; if they cannot taint her Innocence, they will endevor to blaſt her Fame; repreſent her to the World to be what they would have made her, that is in the Pſalmiſts phraſe, *ſuch an one as themſelves*, Pſal. 50. 24. ſo that there is no converſing with them, but with a manifeſt peril either of Vertu or Honor, which ſhould methinks be a ſufficient diſſuaſive. 'Tis true, 'tis not alwaies in ones power to ſhun the meeting with ſuch perſons, they are too numerous, and too intruding to be totally avoided; unleſs, as St. *Paul* ſays, 1 *Cor.* 5. 10. *one ſhould go out of the World.* But all voluntary converſe ſuppoſes a choice, and therefore every body that will may refrain that, may keep on the utmoſt frontiers of civility, without ever ſuffering any approch towards intimacy and familiarity.

33. And ſure were this diſtance duly obſerved, it might be of excellent uſe, a kind of lay Excommuni-

munication, which might come very seasonably to supply the want of the Ecclesiastic now out-dated. And this seems very well to agree with the sense of *Solon*, the wise *Athenian* Law-giver, who, besides that he shut the Temple-doors against them, interdicted them the sacred Assemblies; made it one of his laws, that an Adulteress should not be permitted to wear any ornaments, that so they might in their dress carry the note of their infamy. Should we have the like distinction observed, I fear many of our gaiest birds would be unplumed; and tho the same be not now an expedient practicable, yet the former is, and might be of very good use. For besides that already mentioned of securing the innocent, it might perhaps have a good effect on the guilty, who could not but reflect with some shame on themselves, if they were thus singled out and discriminated; whereas whilst they are suffered to mix with the best Societies, (like hurt Deer in an herd) they flatter themselves they are undiscernable.

34. But indeed the advantage of this course is yet more extensive, and would reach the whole Sex, which now seems to lie under a general scandal, for the fault of particular persons. We know any considerable number of smutty ears casts a blackness on the whole field, which yet were they apart, would perhaps not fill a small corner of it; and in this uncharitable age, things are apt to be denominated not from the greater but worser part: whereas, were the precious se-

vered from the vile, by som note of distinction, there might then a more certain estimate be made; and I cannot be so severe to womankind, as not to believe the scandalous part would then make but a small shew which now makes so great a noise.

35. BESIDES this I can suggest but one way more for women of honor to vindicate their sex, and that is by making their own vertu as illustrious as they can; and by the bright shine of that, draw off mens eies from the worser prospect. And to this there is requir'd not only innocence, but prudence; to abstain, as from all real evil, *so from the appearance of it too*, 1 Thess. 5. 22. nor, by any doubtful or suspicious action, to give any umbrage for censure, but as the Apostle saies in another case, 2 Cor. 11. 12. *to cut off occasion from them that desire occasion*; so deny themselves the most innocent liberties, when any scandalous inference is like to be deduc'd from them. And tho perhaps no caution is enough to secure against the malicious, and the jealous, tho 'tis possible som black mouth may aspense them, yet they have still *Plato's* reserve, who being told of som who had defam'd him, *'tis no matter said he, I will live so that none shall believe them.* If their lives be but such, that they may acquit themselves to the sober and unprejudiced, they have all the security can be aspir'd to in this world; the more evincing arrestation they must attend from the unerring Tribunal hereafter, where there lies a certain appeal for all injur'd persons who can calmly wait for it.

SECT. III.

Of Meekness.

1. IN the next place we may rank Meekness as a necessary feminine Vertu; this even Nature seems to teach, which abhors monstrosities and disproportions, and therefore having allotted to women a more smooth and soft composition of body, infers thereby her intention, that the mind should correspond with it. For tho the adulterations of art can represent in the same Face beauty in one position, and deformity in another; yet nature is more sincere, and never meant a serene and clear forhead should be the frontispiece to a cloudy tempestuous heart. 'Tis therefore to be wisht they would take the admonition, and whilst they consult their glasses, whether to applaud or improve their outward form, they would cast one look inwards, and examin what symmetry is there held with a fair outside; whether any storm of passion darken and overcast their interior beauty, and use at least an equal diligence to rescu that, as they would to clear their face from any stain or blemish.

2. But it is not nature only which suggests this, but the God of nature too, Meekness being not only recommended to all as a Christian Vertu, but particularly enjoin'd to women as a peculiar ac-

com-

compliſhment of their Sex, 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. where after the mention of all the exquiſit and coſtly deckings of art, this one *ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit*, is confronted to them, with this eminent atteſtation, that it is *in the ſight of God of great price*, and therefore to all who will not enter diſpute with God, and conteſt his judgment, it muſt be ſo too. Now, tho Meekneſs be in it ſelf a ſingle entire Verta, yet it is diverſifi'd, according to the ſeveral faculties of the ſoul, over which it has influence; ſo that there is a Meekneſs of the Underſtanding, a Meekneſs of the Will, and a Meekneſs of the Affections, all which muſt concur to make up the Meek and quiet ſpirit.

3. And firſt for the Meekneſs of the Underſtanding, it conſiſts in a pliableneſs to conviction, and is directly oppoſit to that ſullen adherence obſervable in too many; who judg of tenets not by their conformity to truth and reaſon, but to their prepoſſeſſions, and tenaciouſly retain'd opinions, only becauſe they (or ſom in whom they confide) have once own'd them; and certainly ſuch a temper is of all others the moſt obſtructive to Wiſdom. This puts them upon the chance of a Lottery, and what they firſt happen to draw, determines them meerly upon the priviledg of its precedency, ſo that had *Mahomet* firſt ſeiz'd them, his tenure would have bin as indefeſible as Chriſt's now. How great the force of ſuch prejudices are, we may ſee by the oppoſitions it rais'd againſt Chriſtian Doctrin in groſs at its firſt promulgation;

tion; the Jews blind Zeal for the Traditions of their Fathers, engaging them in the murder even of that very Meſſias whom thoſe Traditions had taught them to expect, and after in the perſecution of that Doctrin which his Reſurrection had ſo irrefragably atteſted. And to juſtify the propriety of this obſervation, to thoſe I now write to, 'tis expreſly affirm'd, *Acts* 13. 50. That they made uſe of the zeal of the female Proſelytes for that purpoſe. *The* Jews *ſtirred up the devout and honorable women, and rais'd a perſecution againſt* Paul *and* Barnabas. So that 'tis no unſeaſonable advice to ſuch, to be ſure they ſee well their way before they run too fierce a carriere in it, otherwiſe the greateſt heat without light, do's but reſemble that of the bottomleſs pit, where flames and darkneſs do at once cohabit.

4. But whilſt I decry this prejudicate ſtiffneſs, I intend not to plead for its contrary extreme, and recommend a too eaſy Flexibility; which is a temper of equal, if not more ill conſequence then the former. The adhering to one opinion can expoſe but to one error, but a mind that lies open to the effluxes of all new tenets, may ſucceſſively entertain a whole ocean of deluſions; and to be thus yielding, is not a Meekneſs, but ſervileneſs of Underſtanding. Indeed 'tis ſo great a weakneſs of mind, that the Apoſtle ſinks it ſomwhat below the impotence of women, and reſembles it to that of children, *Eph.* 4. 14. yet it ſeems the folly of ſom women had levell'd them with

children

children in this matter, for the same Apostle takes notice of such, to whom as he gives the Epithet of silly, so the latter part of the Character speaks them incorrigibly so, *ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledg of the truth*, 1 Tim. 3. 6. a description which if we compare with our times, we must think prophetic. For how many instances hath this age given us of women so led captive; who being either affected with the novelty, or seduced by the pretended zeal of a new teacher, have given up their understandings to him: and for a while this strong man has kept possession, but when a stronger then he hath come, it has fared as with him in the Gospel, a louder Zeal, or a newer Doctrin soon divides his spoils; and that by force of the very same principle on which he set up, which within a while undermines the latter also, and so successively, till the poor proselyte has bin hurried thro all the mazes of wild error, and at last perhaps (like a palat distracted by too much variety) she fixes upon that which at first she most decried. This has bin eventually true in som, who setting out in the fiercest detestation of Popery, have wandred so long like the blinded *Syrians*, 2 *Kings* 6. 20. that they have at last found themselves in the midst of *Samaria*; by an insensible circular motion bin brought about to that Religion, from which alone they designed to fly. So little do itching ears know whether they may be carried: and indeed the ear when infected with that prurient humor, may vie Mis-

chief

chiefs with the tongue, which St. *James* tells us, *Chap.* 3.15. *is* (tho a little member) *a world of iniquity.*

4. 'Tis therefore the most important concern of all, to fortifie that so assailable part; but 'tis especially so of women, not only in respect of that natural imbecillity, which renders them liable to seducement, but also because the opinion of their being so, makes them particularly aim'd at by seducers. For, as he who is to put off adulterated wares, will chuse the most unwary chapmen, so these Sophisticators of Divinity desire the most undiscerning Auditors. And truly that so many of that Sex are so, I do not so much impute to any natural defect, as to the loose notions they have of Religion, of which they have perhaps som general confused apprehensions, but have so little penetrated the depth of it, that they know not why they are *Christians* rather then *Turks*, why of the Church of *England* rather then that of *Rome*, or *Geneva*. And while they are thus unfixt, and have no better principle then Custom and Compliance; they have nothing to answer to any the grossest deceit that can be obtruded upon them, which for ought they know or have consider'd, may be as true as any thing they formerly profest. Now when any one in this condition shall be assaulted, not only by the repeated importunities of false teachers, but also by ingeminated threatnings of hell and damnation; she is like one awaked by the outcry of fire, and in that amaze will be apt to

run where-ever the first discoverer of her danger shall lead her.

6. I SHALL therefore most earnestly recommend it as the best Antidote against the poison of novel Doctrins, to examin well the grounds of the old. For want of this it is that our Church has bin exposed to so many frivolous cavils, it being too incident to the perverse Pride of human nature, to speak evil of things we understand not. And had our she-zealots first consulted som sober guides, and from them understood upon what grounds the Practice as well as Doctrin of our Church was founded, they could not so easily have bin carried away *by every wind of Doctrin*, as the Apostle phrases it, *Eph.* 4. 14.

7. INDEED this is no more then common justice exacts, which forbids the condemning even the vilest malefactor unheard, (& unheard and not understood, are in this case terms equivalent) yet sure they ow somthing more to that Church from whose ministry themselves must confess to have derived their Christianity, in whose bosom they have bin cherisht, and consequently may plead a mothers right in them. So that unless possession, which fortifies civil rights, destroies the Ecclesiastic; she may challenge besides that natural justice, (which is the common due of Humanity) a parental respect and reverence, a debt which is sure very ill answered by those who cast off her obedience before they have at all considered what it is she commands. And if the abdicating a child

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be a thing so unnatural, as needs som very important cause to justifie it, the renouncing of a Parent must require a reason as far transcending that, as the guilt do's, if it be causless; and such it must inevitably be in all, who for want of due examination, suffer themselves to be lead into groundless prejudices and disgusts.

8. To prevent that guilt, and a multitude of others which spring from it, I must again repeat my Proposal, that women of Quality (who are presumed to want neither Parts nor leisure for it) would a little look into the inside of the Religion they profess: if it be a true one, 'twill bear the inspection, truth never shunning the light; if it be not, the discovery cannot be too early. And indeed among the many remarkable impresses of truth our Church bears, this is one, that she do's not blindfold her Proselytes, leaves them the use of their discerning Faculty, and do's not by obtruding upon them an implicit belief, force them to lay down their Reason when they take up their Faith. And now why should not Ladies spend a few of their many idle hours in this inquisition, I mean, not to embark themselves in a maze of controversies, but only to discern those plain grounds of Truth on which our Church builds, which if well digested, will prove a better amulet against delusion then the reading whole *Tomes* of Disputations, more apt to distract then fortify the understandings. And had they thus don, had their minds bin ballasted by sober principles, so many of them

had never made up the triumphs of so many and so various seducers. And tho to such this advertisement may come too late (like assistance after a defeat) yet it may be a seasonable caution to others, and to those I offer it, as that very temper wherein consists that rational Meekness of the Understanding I would recommend to them, which is equally violated by a blind Obstinacy, or as blind a Flexibility.

9. A Second sort of Meekness is that of the Will, which lies in its just subordination, and submission to a more supream Autority, which in Divine things is the Will of God; in Natural or Moral, right Reason; and in human Constitutions, the command of Superiors. And so long as the Will governs it self by these in their respective Orders, it transgresses not the Meekness requir'd of it. But experience attests, that the Will is now in its depravation an imperious Faculty, apt to cast off that subjection to which it was design'd; and act independently from those motives which should influence it. This God knows is too common in all Ages, all Conditions, and Sexes: but the Feminine lies more especially under an ill name for it. Whether that have grown from the low opinion conceived of their Reason, less able to maintain its Empire, or from the multipli'd habitual instances themselves have given of unruly Wills, I shall not undertake to determin: but either way 'tis, I am sure, so great a reproch, as they should be very industrious to wipe off. And truly

truly I know nothing more incentive to that endevor, then the having a right estimate of the Happiness as well as Vertu of a governable Will. How calmly do those glide thro all (even the roughest) events, that can but master that stubborn Faculty? A will resign'd to God's, how do's it enervate and enfeeble any calamity? Nay indeed it triumphs over it, and by that conjunction with him that ordains it, may be said to command even what it suffers. 'Twas a Philosophical Maxim, that a Wise moral man could not be injured, could not be miserable. But sure 'tis much more true of him who has that divine Wisdom of Christian resignation, that twists and inwraps all his choices with God's, and is neither at the pains nor hazard of his own elections; but is secure, that unless Omniscience can be deceived, or Omnipotence defeated, he shall have what is really best for him.

10. PROPORTIONABLE (tho not equal) to this, is the happiness of a Will regulated by Reason in things within its Sphere: 'tis the dignity of human Nature, and that which distinguishes it from that of Beasts. Yea, even those grow more contemtible in their kinds, the farther they are removed from it. The stupid sturdiness of an Ass has render'd it Proverbial for folly, when the tractableness of other Animals has temted som to list them among Rationals. Besides, reason affords something of a Basis and Foundation for the Will to bottom on. He that governs himself by reason,

Reason (that being still the same) will act equally and consonant to himself; but he that do's a thing this moment, only because he will, may the next have as weighty an argument to do something quite contrary; and so may spend his whole time in unravelling his *Spiders webs*, as the Prophet rightly calls the vain designs of such brutish men; *Isa.* 59. 5. Not to speak of those recoilings and upbraidings of the rational faculties, which are the uneasy attendants of those who resist its more direct admonitions; there is nothing exposes to more secular ruins. An ungovernable Will is the most precipitous thing imaginable, and like the Devil in the Swine, hurries headlong to destruction; and yet deprives one of that poor reserve, that faint comfort of the miserable, Pitty; which will not be so much invited by the misery, as averted by that wilfulness which caused it. Nay indeed, so little can such persons expect the compassion of others, that 'twill be hard for them to afford themselves their own: the consciousness that their calamities are but the issues of their own perverseness, being apt to dispose them more to hate then pitty. And this is no small accumulation of wretchedness, when a man suffers not only directly, but at the rebound too; reinflicts his miseries upon himself by a grating reflection on his own madness. Yea, so great an aggravation is it, that even Hell it self is enhaunced and compleated by it; all the torments there being edged and sharpned by the woful remembrance, that they might once have bin avoided.

11. In

11. IN the last place a Will duly submissive to lawful Superiors, is not only an amiable thing in the eies of others, but exceedingly happy to ones self; 'tis the parant of peace, and order both public and private. A blessing so considerable, as is very cheaply bought with a little receeding from ones own will or humor: whereas the contrary temper is the spring and original of infinit confusions, the grand incendiary which sets Kingdoms, Churches, Families, in combustion; a flat contradiction not only to the word, but even the works of God; a kind of Anticreative power, which reduces things to that Chaos from whence God drew them. Our age has given us too many and too pregnant instances of its mischievous effects, which may serve to enhaunce the valu of that governable malleable temper I now recommend. And as a will thus resign'd to Reason and just Autority, is a felicity all rational natures should aspire to; so especially the feminine Sex, whose passions being naturally the more impetuous, ought to be the more strictly guarded and kept under the severe discipline of Reason; for where 'tis otherwise, where a woman has no guide but her Will, and her Will is nothing but her Humor, the event is sure to be fatal to her self, and often to others also.

12. AND the hazard of this renders that other restraint of the will, I mean that of obedience to Superiors, a very happy imposition; tho perhaps 'tis not alwaies thought so, for those who re-

sist

ſiſt the government of Reaſon, are not very apt to ſubmit to that of Autority. Yet ſure God and nature do atteſt the particular expediency of this to women, by having placed that Sex in a degree of inferiority to the other. Nay farther 'tis obſervable, that as there are but three ſtates of life, thro which they can regularly paſs, *viz.* Virginity, Marriage, and Widowhood; two of them are ſtates of Subjection, the firſt to the parent, the ſecond to the husband; and the third, as it is caſual, whether ever they arrive to it or no, ſo if they do, we find it by God himſelf reckon'd as a condition the moſt deſolate and deplorable. If I ſhould ſay this happens upon that very ſcore that they are left to their own guidance, the ſad wracks of many would too much juſtify the gloſs, but however it evinces, that God ſets not the ſame valu upon their being maſterleſs, which ſom of them do, whilſt he reckons them moſt miſerable, when they are moſt at liberty.

13. And ſince Gods aſſignation has thus determined ſubjection to be the womens lot, there needs no other argument of its fitneſs, or for their acquieſcence. Therefore whenever they oppoſe it, the contumacy flies higher then the immediat Superior, and reaches God himſelf. And I am apt to think there would not many of that timorous Sex dare ſo far, were it not for ſome falſe punctillioes of honor, which (like thoſe among our Duelliſts) have impoſed themſelves. Theſe repreſent Meekneſs and Submiſſion as a ſilly ſheepiſh quality unfit for women

men of breeding and ſpirit: whilſt an imperious obſtinacy paſſes for nobleneſs and greatneſs of mind. But alas they are wofully miſtaken in their notion of a great ſpirit, which conſiſts in ſcorning to do unworthy and vile things, and courageouſly encountering the adverſe events of life, not in ſpurning at duty, or ſeeking to pull themſelves from that Sphere where the divine Wiſdom hath placed them. No ſure, ſtubbornneſs is the mark only of a great ſtomac, not of a great mind; and the cruelty of a coward may as well denominate him valiant, as the ungovernableneſs of a woman can ſpeak her generous.

14. In this I preſume I ſpeak the common ſenſe of all, for what valu ſoever they put upon themſelves, nothing renders them leſs acceptable to others; an imperious woman being a plague to her relatives, and a deriſion to ſtrangers, yea and a torment to her ſelf: every the leaſt contradiction (which a meek perſon would paſs over inſenſibly) inflaming ſuch an unruly temper, and tranſporting her to ſuch extravagances, as often produce very miſchievous effects. On the other ſide if ſhe be humor'd and complied with, that ſerves only to make her more inſolent and intolerable; makes her humors grow to ſuch an height, that ſhe knows not her ſelf what would pleaſe her, and yet expects that others ſhould: ſo that to ſuch a one, we may apply what *Hannibal* ſaid of *Marcellus*, that if he were vanquiſhed, he never gave reſt to himſelf, nor if he were victo-

rious, to others. Certainly the uneasiness of a perverse spirit is so great, that could such come but to compare it with the calm and happy serenity of Meekness and Obedience, there would need no other Lecture to commend them to their esteem or practice.

15. THE last branch of Meekness is that of Affections, and consists in reducing the passions to a temper and calmness, not suffering them to make uproars within to disturb ones self, nor without to the disquieting of others; and to this regulation Meekness is generally subservient. Yet because the correcting of som particular passions are more immediatly assignable to other vertues, I shall insist only upon that, on which this has a more direct and peculiar influence, I mean Anger, a two edged passion, which whilst it deals its blows without, wounds yet more fatally within. The commotion and vexation which an angry man feels, is far more painful then any thing he can ordinarily inflict upon another: herein justifying the Epither usually given to Anger, that it is a short madness; for who that were in his right wits, would incur a greater mischief to do a less. It is indeed so great a distemper of the mind, that he that is possest with it is incompetent for any sober undertaking, and should as much be suspended from acting, as one in a Phrensie or Lunacy. This was the judgment and practice too of *Plato*, who going to chastise a servant, and finding himself grow angry, stopt his correction; a friend coming

coming in and asking what he was doing, *puniſhing*, replies he, *an angry man*, as thinking himſelf unfit to diſcipline another, till he had ſubdued his own paſſion. Another time his ſlave having offended him, *I would beat thee*, ſaies he, *but that I am angry*. It were endleſs indeed to recite the black Epithets given by all Moraliſts to this vice. It ſhall ſuffice to take the ſuffrage of the Wiſeſt of men, one that had acquainted himſelf to *know madneſs and folly*, Eccl. 1. 17. and we find it his ſentence, that *anger reſts in the boſom of fools*, Eccl. 7. 11.

16. And what is thus univerſally unbecoming to human nature, cannot ſure be leſs indecent for the gentler Sex: 'tis rather more ſo, every thing contracting ſo much more of deformity, by how much it receeds from its proper kind. Now nature hath befriended women with a more cool and temperat conſtitution, put leſs of fire and conſequently of choler, in their compoſitions; ſo that their heats of that kind are adventitious and preternatural, rais'd often by fancy or pride, and ſo both look more unhanſomly, and have leſs of pretence to veil and cover them. Beſides women have a native feebleneſs, unable to back and aſſert their angers with any effective force, which may admoniſh them 'twas never intended they ſhould let looſe to that paſſion, which nature ſeems by that very unability to have interdicted them. But when they do it, they render themſelves at once deſpiſed and abhor'd; nothing

being more ridiculously hateful, then an impotent rage.

17. BUT as the most feeble insect may sometimes disturb, tho not much hurt us, so there is one feminine weapon which as 'tis alwaies ready, so proves often troublesom, I mean the Tongue, which, tho in its loudest clamors can naturally invade nothing but the ear, yet even that is a molestation. The barking of a dog, tho we are secure he cannot bite, is a grating unpleasant sound; and while women seek that way to vent their rage, they are but a sort of speaking brutes, and should consider whether that do not reflect more contemt upon themselves, then their most virulent reproches can fix upon others.

18. BUT som things have had the luck to acquire a formidableness no body knows how, and sure there is no greater instance of it then in this case. A clamorous woman is lookt on, tho not with reverence, yet with much dread; and we often find things don to prevent or appease her storms, which would be denied to the calm and rational desires of a meeker person. And perhaps such successes have not bin a little accessory to the fomenting the humor: yet sure it gives them little cause of triumph, when they consider how odious it makes them, how unfit (yea intolerable) for human society; let them take the verdict of *Solomon* who declares *it better to dwell in a corner of a house top, then with a brawling woman in a wide house.* Prov. 25. 24. Nor do's the son of *Sirac* speak

ſpeak leſs ſharply tho more ironically, *Eccluſ.* 26, 27. *A loud crying woman and a ſcold, ſhall be ſought out to drive away the enemy.* And tho he taxes the feminine vices impartially enough, yet there is ſcarce any of them which he more often and more ſeverely brands then this of unquietneſs. It ſeems 'twas a thing generally lookt on, as very inſufferable; as appears by *Socrates*, who when he deſign'd to diſcipline himſelf to perfect patience and tolerance, knew no better way of exerciſe, then to get a ſhrew to his wife, an excellence that may perhaps again recommend a woman, when we fall to an age of Philoſophers; but at preſent 'twill be hard for any of our *Xantippes* to find a *Socrates*; and therefore that quality is as deſtructive to their intereſts in getting husbands, as it is to the husbands quiet when he is got. But I preſume I need not declame further againſt this fault, which I ſuppoſe cannot be frequent among that rank of women to whom this Tract is intended: for if neither moral nor divine Conſiderations have prevented it, yet probably civility and a gentile education hath: a ſcold being a creature to be lookt for only in Stalls and Markets, not among perſons of quality. Yet if there be any that have deſcended to ſo ſordid a practice, they have ſo far degraded themſelves, that they are not to wonder if others ſubſtract that reſpect, which upon other accounts they might demand.

19. And to ſuch I ſhould recommend the uſual method of Phyſic, which is to cure by revul-

ſion,

sion, let that sharp humor which so habitually flows to the tongue, be taught a little to recoile, and work inward; and instead of reviling others, discipline and correct themselves: let them upbraid their own madness, that to gratifie an impotent, nay a most painful passion, have degenerated from what their nature, their qualities, their education, design'd them. And if they can thus reverse their displeasures, 'twill not only secure others from all their indecent assaults, but it will at last extinguish them. For Anger is corrosive, and if it be kept only to feed upon its self, must be its own devourer; if it be permitted to fetch no forrage from without, nor to nurish it self with suspicions and surmises of others, nor to make any sallies at the tongue, it cannot long hold out.

AND how much they will herein consult their interest and their reputation too, they may be taught by *Solomon*, who makes it the distinctive *sign of a foolish woman to be clamorous*, Prov. 9. 13. whereas when he gives the character of his Excellent woman, he links Wisdom and Gentleness together, *she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness*, Prov. 31. 26. If this verdict may be admitted (as sure it ought, whether we consider his wisdom, or dear bought experience in women) it will confute the common plea of querulous spirits, who think to seem insensible of any the least provocation, is to appear silly and stupid; tho truly if it were so, 'twould

'twould be full as eligible as to appear mad and raving, as they commonly do in the tranſport of their fury.

21. To conclude, Meekneſs is ſo amiable, ſo indearing a quality, and ſo peculiarly embelliſhing to women, that did they but all conſider it with half the attention they do their more trivial exterior ornaments, 'twould certainly be taken up as the univerſal mode, in all the ſeveral variations of it this Section has preſented.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Of Compassion.

1. OF near Affinity to the Vertu of Meekness, is that of Mercy and Compassion, which indeed can scarce thrive in any place where the former hath not prepared the soil: Anger and Obstinacy being like that rough East-wind which brought the Egyptian Locusts, *Exod.* 10. 13. to eat up every green thing in the Land. A mind harrassed with its own impatiency, is not at leisure to observe, much less to condole the calamities of others. But as a calm and clear day befriends us with a more distinct Prospect of distant Objects, so when all is quiet and serene within us, we can then look about us, and discern what exigencies of others invite our pitty.

2. I need not say much to raise an estimate of this Vertu, since 'tis so essential to our Nature, so interwoven in the composition of Humanity, that we find in Scripture phrase, Compassion is generally seated in the most inward sensible part of our frame, the bowels. So *Col.* 3. 12. *Put on therefore bowels of mercy*; and *Phil.* 2. 1. *Bowels and mercies.* So that a cruel ruthless person unmans himself, and is by the common vote of mankind to be listed among brutes; nay, not among the better, but only the more hateful, noxious sort of them.

3. BUT

3. But this is yet more unnatural in the female Sex, which being of softer mold, is more pliant and yielding to the impressions of pitty, and by the strength of fancy redoubles the horror of any sad object. Yea so remarkable is this tenderness, that God, when he would most magnify his own compassion, illustrates it by that of women, as the highest human instance. Indeed such a propension have women to commiseration, that they are usually taxed with an excess in it; so that any imprudent lenity is Proverbially called, A womanish Pitty, and therefore it may be thought an impertinence to exhort them to that which they can scarce avoid. But to this I answer; first, that in this degenerous age, 'tis no news to see people violate their instincts, as well as their duties, and be worse then their nature inclines them, many sins being committed even against the grain, and with violence to constitution.

4. Yet secondly, 'tis not a meer melting of the eies, or yerning of the bowels I design to recommend: Alas, their tears will not be drink to a thirsty soul, nor will shivering at his nakedness cloth him. This is such an insignificant mercy as St. *James* describes, saying to a brother or sister, *be ye warmed, be ye filled, but not giving them things needful to the body*, c. 2. 16. Indeed, she that weeps over those distresses she will not relieve, might have bin fit to be enter'd in the list of the mourning women among the Jews and Heathens, who were hired to make up the Tragic Pomp of

Funerals with their mercenary ſorrow, but had no real concern in that loſs they ſeemed to bewail. 'Tis therefore a more active ſort of Compaſſion to which I would invite them; and yet for method ſake, I ſhall conſider it under two diſtinct Heads, Giving, and Forgiving.

5. BY Giving, in this place, I mean not a general liberality, (tho that prudently bounded, is an Excellence well becoming Perſons of Fortune) but only ſuch a Giving as terminates upon the needy, and is applied to ſuccor their indigencies. To give to thoſe from whom they may expect returns, may be a deſign, but at the beſt can be but generoſity and frankneſs of humor. 'Tis only then mercy (as Chriſt Himſelf has defined it) when it is to thoſe from whom they can *hope for nothing again.*

6. AND in this Vertu women have in former Ages eminently excelled, yea ſo eſſential was it, that we find *Solomon* thought not their character compleat without it, but numbers it among the properties of his Vertuous Woman, *Prov.* 31. 20. *She ſtretcheth forth her hand to the poor, and reacheth her hand to the needy.* And it is a little obſervable, that after he has deſcrib'd her Induſtry and Diligence for the acquiring of Wealth, this is ſet in the front of her diſburſments, as the principal uſe ſhe made of it, and precedes her providing Scarlet for her Houſhold, or fine Linnen and Purple for her ſelf, v. 21, 22. The application is very obvious, and admoniſhes all that own the ſame

Title

Title of Vertuous Women, to prefer the necessities of others before their own superfluities and delicacies. Nay, if they look further, and consider who it is that is personated in the poor, that begs in every needy distrest suppliant, and that will finally own every act of mercy as don to himself; methinks they should somtimes think fit to sacrifice even their most moderate enjoiments to their charity, be ashamed to serve themselves before their Savior, or let him stand naked and hungry, whilst they are solacing with that which would relieve him.

7. But how then shall they answer it, who suffer him to be supplanted, not by their needs, but excesses; who have so devoted their hearts and purses to vanity and luxury, that they have neither will nor power to succor the wants of others? How unequal and disproportionate is it, that those who study to fling away mony upon themselves, cannot be temted by any importunity and distress, to drop an alms to the poor? What a prepostterous sight is it to see a Lady, whose gay Attire gives her the glittering of the Sun, yet have nothing of its other properties, never to cheer any drooping, languishing creature by her influence? 'Tis the counsel of the son of *Sirac*, *not to give the poor any occasion to curse thee*, Eccluſ. 4. 5. But sure such persons do it, if the poor happen not to have more Charity then they exemplify to them. For when they shall find such hard hearts under such soft raiment, see them bestow

so much upon the decking their own bodies, and do nothing towards the necessary support of theirs; 'tis a shrewd trial of their Meekness. Poverty is apt of it self to imbitter the spirit, and needs not such an additional temtation.

8. NAY farther, when a poor starving wretch shall look upon one of these gay creatures, and see that any one of the baubles, the looseſt appendage of her dress, a fan, a busk, perhaps a black patch, bears a price that would warm his emty bowels; will he not have sharp incitations not only to execrate her pride, and his own poverty, but consequently to repine at the unequal distribution of Providence, and add sin to his misery? The denial therefore of an alms may be a double cruelty, to the soul as well as to the body. 'Tis said of *Xenocrates*, that a chased Bird flying to his bosom, he rescued it with much satisfaction, saying, He had not betraid a suppliant; but this is in that case reverst, and in an higher instance; for what can be more the betraying of a suppliant, then instead of supplying his wants, to rob him of his innocence, and be his snare in lieu of his refuge? This is a consideration I wish more deeply impreſt upon the women of this Age; and truly 'tis their concern it should be so; for since at the last day the inquest shall be so particular upon this very thing, 'tis but necessary they should examin how they are fitted to pass that test.

9. Let them therefore keep a preparatory audit within their own breſt, reflect upon the ex-

pences

pences of their vanity, what the delicacy of their food, what the richnes and variety of their clothes, nay what the meer hypocrisies of their dress, in false hair, and complexion has cost them; to which they may also add the charge of their recreations and divertisments, those costly arts of chasing away that time, which they will one day wish to recal: let them I say compute all this, and then confront to it the account of their Charity, and I much fear the latter will with many of them be comparatively as undiscernible, as *Socrates* found *Alcibiades's* Lands in the Map of the whole World, be so perfectly overwhelm'd, that it will appear little in their own sight and nothing in Gods.

10. For if the poor Widows mite acquired a valu meerly from her poverty, that she had no more; by the rule of contraries we may conclude, how despicable the scanty oblations of the rich are in Gods account. If even their liberality who gave much, was outvied by a farthing, *Mar.* 12. 41. to what point of diminution must their niggardly offerings, who give little, be reduced, especially when they shall be compared with the numerous and costly sacrifices they make to pride and luxury. Nay I wish som were not guilty of more then the disproportion, even the total omission of Charity, that in a multitude of Taylors bills cannot produce the account of one Garment for the poor, that amidst the delicacies of their own diet. (nay perhaps of their dogs too) never order'd so much as the crumbs of their Table to any

hungry

hungry *Lazarus*. But let all such remember, that there will come a time, when one of *Tabitha's* coats, *Act.* 9. 39. will be of more valu then all their richest Wardrobes, tho they could number Gowns with *Lucullus's* Cloaks, which the *Roman* Story reports to be 5000; and that when their luxurious fare shall only feast the worms, and render them passive in that Epicurism they acted before, they will wish they had made the bellies of the poor their refectory, and by feeding them nurished themselves to immortality.

11. LET this I say be seriously remember'd now, least hereafter they fall under the same exprobrating remembrance with the rich man in the Gospel, Luke 16. 25. *Remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and* Lazarus *that which was evil; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.* A Text which St. *Gregory* professes was ever sounding in his ears, and made him look with suspicion and dread upon that grandeur to which he was advanced, as fearing it might be design'd as his final reward. With what terror then may those look upon their present good things, who by ingrossing them wholly to themselves, own them as their entire portion, and implicitly disclaim their share of the future? For to that none must pretend, who receive their transitory goods under any other notion, then that of a Steward or Factor: as we may see in the parable of the Talents, where those that had the reward of the five and ten Cities were not such as had consumed

their

their Talents upon their own riot and excesses, but such as had industriously employed them according to the design of their Lord. And if it there fared so ill with the meer unprofitable servant, who had hoarded up his Talent, what shall become of those, who squander away theirs, and can give no account either of Use or Principle?

12. WERE these considerations duly laid to heart, we might hope to see som of the Primitive Charity revive, when women of the Highest rank converted their Ornaments and costly Deckings into clothing for the poor, and thought no retinue so desirable, so honorable as a train of Alms-folks. But I speak improperly, when I make the poor their attendants, for indeed they rather attended the poor, did not only order the supply of their wants, but were themselves their ministers, waited about their sick beds, dreſt their most loathsom ulcers, and descended to all the most servile offices about them.

13. BUT these were such heights, such transcendencies of mercy, as required a deeper foundation of Humility then will now be often met with: yet let me take the occasion to say, that it may be a good managery of a charity to act (as far as they can) personally in it. For besides that it prevents som abuses and frauds, which deputed Agents may somtimes be temted too, they pay God a double tribute in it, of their persons as well as their fortunes. Next they bring themselves into acquaintance with the poor, and by that means

correct

correct those contemts and nice disdains, which their own prosperity is too apt to create. Further yet, they excite their own compassion, which being a motion of the sensitive part of the mind, cannot be stirr'd so effectually by any thing, as by the presence of the object; the most pathetic tragical description of a distress, being not able to affect us half so much as one ocular demonstration. Lastly 'tis an apt means to increase their thankfulness to Almighty God, whose bounty to themselves must needs make a deeper impression, when 'tis compared with the necessitous condition of others. For things are best illustrated by their contraries, and 'tis too observable in our depraved nature, that we valu not things by their real positive worth, but comparatively as they excel others, nor ever make a right estimate of what we enjoy, till our own or others wants instruct us.

14. Upon all these considerations it may be a very becoming useful circumstance in any charitable ministery to be themselves the actors; and to that end 'twill be a very commendable industry, to qualifie themselves to be helpful to the poor in as many instances as they can; not only opening their purses, but dispensatories too, providing medecines for such as either by disease, or casualty want that sort of relief. A charity which I doubt not is practised by many, and I wish it were by more, that our nicer Dames who study only Cosmetics for themselves, would change the Scene, and instead

instead of repairing or disguising their own complexions, study the restauration of their decrepit patient limbs. And sure, tho it be a less fashionable, 'tis much a better sight, to see a Lady binding up a sore, then painting her face; and she will cast a much sweeter savor in God's nostrils, with the smell of unguents and balsoms, then with the most exquisit odors and perfumes. For since God professes, *Isa.* 1. that that very *incense* which was design'd as a part of his worship, *was an abomination to him*, because not accompanied with the acts of Mercy, we cannot think he will better like of those, which have no higher aim then delicacy and sensuality.

15. But besides this part of mercy in Giving, there is another, that of Forgiving, which may happen to be of a larger extent then the former: for whereas that was confin'd to the poor, this has no such limits, but as it is possible to be injured by persons of all ranks, so this pardoning mercy is to reach equally with that possibility. This is that part of Charity which we peculiarly call Clemency, a Vertu which not only Christianity but Morality recommends. The Ancient *Romans* had it in such veneration, that they number'd it not only among Vertues but Deities, and built it a Temple. And they were somwhat towards the right in it, for it was, tho not God, yet so eminent an attribute of his, that nothing can more assimilate man unto him.

16. THERE are many Heroic acts of this kind to be met with among the vertuous Heathens. *Lycurgus* not only forgave *Alexander* who had ſtruck out his eie, but entertain'd him in his houſe, and by his gentle admonitions reclaim'd him from his former vicious life. *Ariſtides* being after ſignal ſervices, and without crime, unjuſtly baniſhed by his Citizens, was ſo far from acting, or imprecating againſt them, that at his departure from *Athens* he ſolemnly praied the Gods, that they might never by any trouble or diſtreſs be forced to recall him. So *Phocion* being unjuſtly condemned, left it as a ſolemn charge to his ſon *Phocas*, that he ſhould never revenge his death. A multitude of the like examples might be produced, but we need not borrow light from their faint Tapers, when we have the Sun-beams, I mean the Sun of Righteouſneſs, our bleſſed Savior, who, as he has recommended this grace by his precept, ſo he has ſignally exemplified it to us in his Practice; the whole deſign of his deſcent to earth being only to reſcue his enemies from deſtruction. And as every part of his life, ſo the laſt Scene of it was particularly adapted to this end, and his expiring Breath expended in mediating for his crucifiers; *Father forgive them, Luk.* 23. 34. And this copy of his was tranſcribed by his firſt followers, the Primitive Chriſtians in their ſevereſt Martyrdoms praying for their perſecutors.

17. THUS are we in the Apoſtles phraſe *compaſſed about with a cloud of witneſſes*, Heb. 12. 1.

of

of eminent examples, which ought to have a forcible influence upon all, but methinks ſhould not fail to have it on that Sex, whoſe native tenderneſs prediſpoſes them to the Vertu, and who need but ſwim with the ſtream of their own inclinations. How can we think that their melting eies ſhould ever ſparkle fire, or delight in ſpectacles of cruelty, that their flexible tender hearts ſhould turn into Steel or Adamant, be uncapable of all impreſſions of pitty? Yet God knows ſuch changes have too often bin ſeen: women have not only put off that ſoftneſs peculiar to them, but the common inſtincts of Humanity, and have exceeded not only ſavage men, but beaſts in cruelty. There have bin too frequent inſtances of the implacable malice, and inſatiable cruelties of women. *I* need not call in the aid of Poetic fiction, and tell them of *Clytemneſtra*, *Medea*, or the *Belides*, with hundreds of others, celebrated as inſtances of Heroic wickedneſs. There are examples enough in more authentic Stories, The *Roman Tullia*, the *Perſian Paryſatis*; and that we may not paſs by the ſacred Annals, *Jezebel*, and *Athaliah*. *I* forbear to multiply examples of this kind, of which all ages have produced ſom ſo eminent, as have render'd it a common obſervation, that no cruelty exceeds that of an exaſperated woman: & it is not much to be wonder'd at, ſince nothing can be ſo ill in its priſtine ſtate as that which degenerates from a better. No enmity we know ſo bitter as that of alienated friends; no ſuch perſecution as

that of Apoſtats, and proportionably no ſuch ferity as that of a perverted mildneſs. So that the Poets were not much out, who as they repreſented the Graces under the figures of women, ſo they did the Furies too. And ſince 'tis in their election which part they will act, they ought to be very jealous over themſelves. The declinations to any vice are gradual, ſomtimes at firſt ſcarce diſcernable; and probably the greateſt monſters of cruelty, would at the beginning have deteſted thoſe inhumanities which afterwards they acted with greedineſs.

18. IT concerns them therefore to ward thoſe beginnings whoſe end may be ſo fatal. She that is quick in apprehending an affront, perhaps will not be ſo quick in diſmiſſing that apprehenſion; & if it be permitted to ſtay, 'twill quickly improve, twenty little circumſtances ſhall be ſuborn'd to foment it with new ſuſpicions, till at laſt it grow to a quarrel, from thence to hatred, from that to malice, and from that to revenge: and when that black paſſion has overſpread the mind, like an Egyptian darkneſs it admits no gleam of Reaſon or Religion, but hurries them blindfold to their own ruin often as well as others.

19. LAST none think this only a fancy or ſcheme of Diſcourſe: there have bin too many tragical experiments of its truth. How many men have bin mortally engaged upon no weightier original then the ſpleen of a woman? the frantic notion of honor among our Duelliſts fitly correſponding with the as frantic impulſes of feminine revenge, and

and any imaginary injury (or perhaps but just imputation) to the Lady, obliging her Gallant to rush upon the most real sin and danger. A madness something beyond that which the Romances describe of Knight Errantry: for that generally is for the relief of distressed Damsels, but this is only to humor the too prosperous ones, the insolent and the proud. Those therefore that have observed the common occasions of Duels, have not unfitly divided them between Wine and Women; it being hard to say which is the most intoxicating and besotting. The Son of *Sirac* couples them together, *Eccluſ.* 19. 2. *Wine and Women will make men of understanding fall away.* The many modern examples of this mischief, as it should strike an extreme terror into those Women who have bin any way accessary to the death, or but danger of any man; so it is just matter of caution to all, so to regulate their Passions, that they never come within distance of Implacability; for if once they arrive there, themselves can give no stop.

20. In order to this, 'twill be well to consider at the first incitation, what the real ground is; perhaps sometimes they are angry (as the Galatians were at St. *Paul*, *Gal.* 4. 16.) *at those that tell them the truth*; som scandalous, or at least suspicious behavior, may have engaged a friend to admonish them, (an office that has sometimes proved very fatal; those commonly that have most guilt having less patience to hear of it.) And if this be the case, 'tis the greatest injustice in the world

to

to make that a quarrel which is really an obligation: and therefore instead of maligning their Monitor, they ought to thank and reverence him. Nay, tho the accusation be not with that candid design, but be meant as a reproch; yet if it be true, it should not excite anger at their accusers, but remorse, and reformation in themselves.

21. It was the saying of a Wise man, that he profited more by his enemies then his friends; because they would tell him more roundly of his faults. And this is excellently improved by *Plutarch*, in his Tract, *Of the benefits to be reap'd from Enemies*: so that even a malicious accusation may be a kindness, and consequently ought not to be repaid with an injury. But suppose, in the last place, that the aspersion be not only unkind, but untru, it will not even then be safe to let loose to their indignation. First, in respect of Prudence, an angry vindication serving the design of the enemy, and helping to spread the calumny; whereas a wise neglect nd dissembling do's often stifle and suppress it. Secondly, in respect of duty, for all that own themselves Christians, must confess they are under an obligation to forgive, and not to revenge. Now if they intend to pay a real obedience to this Precept, 'twill be the more easie, the sooner they set to it. He that sees his house on fire, will not dally with the flame, much less blow, or extend it, resolving to quench it at last. And anger is as little to be trusted, which if once throughly kindled, will scarce expire

pire but with the deſtruction of the ſubject it works on.

22. LET therefore the diſoblig'd not look back upon the injury, but forward to thoſe miſchiefs which too ſharp a reſentment may betray them to: let them conſider, that the boiling of their blood may finally cauſe the effuſion of anothers, and wrath may ſwell into murder. If they would do thus, and inſtead of thoſe magnifying optics wherein they view the wrong, make uſe of the other end of the perſpective, to diſcern the diſmal event at diſtance; it would ſure fright them from any nearer approch, would keep them within thoſe bounds which their duty preſcribes them, and thereby acquaint them with a much greater, and more ingenious pleſure then their higheſt revenge can give them: I mean that of forgiving injuries, and obliging the injurious. This is a pleſure ſo pure and refined, ſo noble and heroic, that none but rational natures are capable of it; whereas that of Spight and Revenge (if it can be called a pleſure) is a meer beſtial one; every the moſt contemtible animal can be angry when 'tis moleſted, and endevor to return the miſchief.

23. IT ſhould therefore, methinks, be an eaſy determination, whether to embrace that Clemency and Compaſſion which we ſee exemplified in the wiſeſt and beſt of men, nay in the Omniſcient, Immortal God, or that ſavage fierceneſs of the ignobleſt creatures. This is certain, that no woman

man would be content to assume the outward form of any of those: why then should they subject their nobler part, the mind, to such a transformation? For, as there are no monsters so deformed, as those which are compounded of man and beast: so among them all, nothing can be more unnatural, more odious, then a woman-Tiger. I conclude all with the advice of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 17. 14. *The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention before it be medled with.* When once a breach is made upon the spirit by immoderate anger, all the consequent mischiefs will flow in, like a rapid stream when the banks are broken down; nor is there any way to prevent it, but by keeping the mounds entire, preserving that Tenderness and Compassion which God and Nature do equally inforce and recommend.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

Of Affability.

1. IN the next place we may reckon Affability and Courteſie; which as it is amiable in all, ſo it is ſingularly ſo in women of Quality, and more univerſally neceſſary in them then in the other Sex. For men have often charges and emploiments which do juſtify, nay perhaps require ſomwhat of ſternneſs and auſterity; but women ordinarily have few or no occaſions of it, and thoſe who have well digeſted the former Lectures of Meekneſs and Compaſſion, will not be apt to put it on unneceſſarily. Now Affability may be conſidered either as a meer human Accompliſhment, or as a divine Vertu; in either notion 'tis commendable, but 'tis the latter that gives it the higheſt Excellence and Perfection.

2. To begin with the firſt notion of it, we may take an eſtimate of its worth by its Cauſe, and by its Effects. For its Cauſe, it derives it ſelf either from a native candor and generoſity of mind, or from a noble and ingenious Education, or ſomthing jointly from both; and theſe are as good Originals as any thing meerly moral can flow from. And that theſe are indeed its ſources, common experience will atteſt: thoſe of the greateſt Minds, and beſt Extractions, being uſually

most condescending and obliging; whereas those of most abject Spirits and Birth, are the most insulting and imperious. *Alexander* the Great, tho terrible in the field, yet was of a gentle, complaisant conversation, familiarly treating those about him: yet *Crispinus*, *Narcissus*, *Nymphidius*, and other enfranchised bondmen, we find insolently trampling upon the Roman Senators and Consuls. 'Tis therefore a great error for Persons of Honor, to think they acquire a reverence by putting on a supercilious gravity, looking coily and disdainfully upon all about them; 'tis so far from that, that it gives a suspicion that 'tis but a pageantry of greatness, som mushrom newly sprung up, that stands so stiff, and swells so much. But instead of teaching others to keep their distance, this fastidious disdain invites them to a closer inspection, that if there be any flaw either in their life or birth, 'twill be sure to be discovered, there being no such prying inquisitor as curiosity, when 'tis egg'd on by a sense of contemt.

3. On the other side, if we consider the effects of Courtesie, they are quite contrary; it endears to all, and often keeps up a Reputation in spight of many blemishes: a kind look or word from a Superior is strangely charming, and insensibly steals away mens hearts from them. This the Wise man refers to *Eccluſ.* 18. 16. when he prefers a Word before a Gift. And 'tis *Plutarch*'s observation of *Cleomenes* King of *Sparta*, that when

when the Grecians compared his Affability and easiness of Access with the sullen state and pride of other Princes, they were so enamored with it, that they judged him only worthy to be a King. And as there is no certainer, so also no cheaper way of gaining love: a friendly salutation is as easy as a frown or reproch; and that kindness may be preserved by them, which if once forfeited, will not at a far greater price be recovered.

4. BESIDES, when human vicissitudes are considered, it may be a point of Prudence too; the greatest Persons may sometimes want assistance from the meanest; nay sometimes the face of affairs is quite changed, and the wheel of Fortune turns them lowest that were uppermost, and proportionably elevates the meanest. 'Tis wisdom therefore so to treat all, as to leave no impressions of unkindness, since none is so despicable, but may possibly at one time or other have an opportunity to retaliate. 'Twas therefore a prudent as well as an equitable resolution of the Emperor, who said he would so entertain the addresses of his Subjects, as, if he were a Subject, he would wish the Prince should entertain him: a rule very worthy to sway all Persons of Honor in their entercourse with others. And since even among Persons in Command there are degrees, and the which is superior to one, is inferior to another; they have a ready way to compare the civility they pay, with that they expect. Let therefore one who meers with a cold, neglectful

Treatment from any above her, examin her own resentments, and then reflect, that if she give the like to those below her, they will doubtless have the same sense; and therefore let her resolve never to offer what she so much dislikes to bear: and she that do's thus, that makes such inferences, will convert an Injury into a Benefit; civilize her self by the rudeness of others, and make that ill nurture her own discipline.

5. BUT hitherto we consider Affability only in its ethnic dress, as it is a human ornament; 'twill appear yet more enamoring upon a second view, when we look on it as bearing the impress of the Sanctuary, as a divine Vertu. And that it is capable of being so, we have the autority of St. *Paul*, who inserts it in the number of those Christian Graces which he recommends to his Roman Proselytes; *Condescend to them of low estate*, Rom. 12. 16. And that we may the better discern its valu, 'tis observable that he links it with the most eminent Vertu of Humility; for it immediatly follows his Precept of *be not high minded*. Indeed 'tis not only joined with it as a Friend or Allie, but derived from it as its stock and Principle: and certainly a more divine extraction it cannot have, Humility being the *Alpha* and *Omega* of Vertues, that which laies the foundation (without which the most towring Structure will but crush it self with its own weight) and that which perfects and consummates the building also, secures and crowns all other Graces; which when they are most verdant

and

and flouriſhing, are like *Jonas* his gourd, that may afford ſom ſhadow and refreſhment for a while, but are apt to breed that worm which will deſtroy them. When once they are ſmitten with Pride, they inſtantly fade and wither; ſo neceſſary is Humility both for the acquiring and conſerving all that is good in us.

6. WE may therefore conclude, that Courteſie, and Obligingneſs of behavior which proceeds thence, is in reſpect of its ſpring and original, infinitly to be preferr'd before that which deſcends from no higher ſtock then natural or prudential motives. And ſince 'tis natural for every production to have ſom ſimilitude to that which produces it, we ſhall find it no leſs excellent in reſpect of its properties then its deſcent. *I* ſhall inſtance only in two, Sincerity, and Conſtancy.

7. FOR the firſt as far as Affability partakes of Humility it muſt of Sincerity alſo, that being a vertu whoſe very elements are plainneſs and ſimplicity: for as it has no deſigns which want a cover, ſo it needs none of thoſe ſubtilties and ſimulations, thoſe pretences and artifices requiſite to thoſe that do. 'Tis the precept of the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 2. 3. *In lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem others better then himſelf:* where we ſee 'tis the nature of a lowly mind to transfer that eſteem to others which he ſubſtracts from himſelf: now where ſuch an eſteem is planted in the heart, it verifies all the expreſſions and outward ſignifications of reſpect, and renders the greateſt condeſcentions which

(which to an insolent humor may seem extravagant and affected) real and unfeigned.

8. ON the contrary that Courtesie which derives no higher then from meer human principles, is not much to be confided in. 'Tis the Psalmists affirmation *that all men are liars:* and therefore there is more then a possibility of deceit in their fairest shews. Sometimes we know smooth and plausible addresses have bin designed as the stale to vile and trecherous practices. The extraordinary blandishments and endearing behavior of *Absolom* to the people, was only to *steal their hearts*, and advance his intended rebellion, 2 *Sam.* 15. and *David* tells us of som, *whose words were softer then butter, having war in the heart, whose words were smoother then oil, and yet were very swords*, *Psal.* 55. 21. and God knows this age has not so much improved in sincerity, that we should think the same Scenes are not daily acted over among us.

9. BUT besides all the blacker projects of this kind, which nothing but the event can detect, there is a lower sort of this trechery, which is visible, nay so avowed, that it is one of the most common subjects of mirth and entertainment, I mean that of scoffing and derision, a thing too frequent among all, but I fear I may say very peculiarly among Ladies, those at least of the modish sort, their very civilities and caresses being often design'd to gain matter of scorn and laughter. Mutual visits we know are an expression of respect,

and

and should flow from a real kindness, but if those now in use be sifted, how few will be found of that make? They are at the best formal, a tribute rather paid to custom then friendship, and many go to see those, for whom they are perfectly indifferent whether they find them alive or dead, well or sick. Nay very often they are worse then thus, design'd only to make observations, to bolt out somthing ridiculous wherewith to sport themselves as soon as they are gon; and least the inquest should return with a *non inventus*, they will accept of the slightest discoveries, the least misplacing of a word, nay of a hair shall be theme enough for a Comedy.

10. But if a poor Country Gentlewoman fall within their circuit, what a stock of mirth do's she afford them, how curiously do they anatomise every part of her dress, her meen, her dialect, nay perhaps to improve the Scene, will recommend yet greater absurdities to her, under the notion of the Mode, that so she may be the more ample subject of their scorn. Such visits as these are but insidious intrusions, the insinuations of a spy rather then the good office of a neighbor; and when 'tis remembred how great a portion of som womens time is spent in this kind of diversion, we must conclude there have a multitude of acts gon to make up the habit. I wish they would seriously reflect on it, and unravel that injurious mirth by a penitential sadness, and either spend their time better then in visiting, or else direct their visits to better

better purposes. And this they would certainly do if they would exchange their meer popular civilities (that kind of paint and varnish in manners) for that true Christian condescension, which admits of no deceit, but is as transparent as *Drusus* wisht his house should be, that has no secret scrues and springs, to move the eies or tongue a contrary way from the heart, but is in reality all that it pretends to be.

11. A second property of it is Constancy, for as it is true to others, so it is to its self; 'tis founded on the solidest of Vertues, and is not subject to those light and giddy uncertainties, that the vulgar civilities are. For he that out of a disesteem of his proper worth, has placed himself in a state of inferiority, will think it not an arbitrary matter, but a just debt to pay a respect to those he thinks his betters; and an humble mind will in every body find something or other to prefer to himself. So that he acts upon a fixt principle, and is not in danger of those contradictions in his manners, which shall render him one day sweet and affable, and another sowre and morose. But such mutations are frequently incident to those who are swaied by other motives, sometimes an interest changes, and then the most fauning Sycophant can transplant his flatteries, and court a new Patron, yea many times to the despight and vilifying of the old.

12. SOMTIMES again, fortune may change; a man may fall from a prosperous to an adverse

verſe ſtate, and then thoſe who were prodigal of their civilities whilſt he needed nothing elſe, will withdraw even thoſe from him, leſt they ſhould incourage him to demand ſomthing more; an experiment of this *Job* made in his friends (or rather flatterers) whom he fitly compares to winter brooks, running over when not needed, but quite dry when they are.

13. But the moſt frequent change is that of fancy and humor, which has a much more general ſway then reaſon and judgment. This is ſo obſervable in the vulgar rabble, that often in an inſtant they will ſhift paſſions, and hate this hour what they doted on the laſt. Of this all popular States have afforded many coſtly experiments, but we need not go farther than the ſacred Story, where we find the Acclamations and *Heſannahs* of the multitude, quickly converted into *crucifie him, crucifie him.* This levity of mind has bin obſerved ſo incident to women, that 'tis become almoſt proverbial; for by how much their paſſions are more violent, they are commonly the leſs laſting, and as they are reckon'd among thoſe colder bodies that are particularly influenced by the Moon, ſo they ſeem to bear a great reſemblance to her in her viciſſitudes and changes; yet ſtill with a greater degree of uncertainty: for ſhe in all her revolutions obſerves ſom conſtant periods, and we can tell in her wain when ſhe will be at full, ſo that ſhe has a kind of certainty even in her planetary errors; but what Ephemerides can be

framed for som womens humors? who can tell how long the present will last? and what will be the next that will succeed?

14. I need not bring instances of their inconstancy from that common place of passionate widows, who have let a new love fail even thro those floods of tears wherewith they bewailed the old. For (besides that, that is a case wherein possibly they may find matter enough for retortion) it is here a little wide from my purpose, which designs no farther inquisition then into their ordinary conversation, wherein that love of variety which is so remarkable in their habit, their diet, their diversions, extends its self often to their company, their friendships also and converse. Those intimacies which they cherisht lately, quickly grow despicable, and at last nauseous, and consequently their behavior falls from kind and civil, to cold and disdainful. I doubt not this has often bin proved by many of those humble companions, which officiously attend them, who cannot alwaies fix themselves, no not by those flatteries that first introduced them. Som new comer perhaps has better refined the Art, and do's the same thing more acutely and ingeniously, and then the old one is to be turned off as too gross a Sycophant. Or if they have bin so happy as to light upon som of a more generous temper, who instead of a servile compliance with their humor, and high characters of their worth entertain them with the true images of themselves

and

and endevor to make what others only speak them, this is that unpardonable crime which forfeits all degrees of favor, and do's not only avert, but incense. A faithful Monitor is as unacceptable as a true Looking-glass to a deformed person, which at the best will be set aside, and escapes well if not broken; and while great persons dispense their favors or their frowns by such perverse mesures as these, they will be sure to do it unjustly, as well as unconstantly.

15. I AM far from making this an universal charge, I know there are women of the highest quality, that guide themselves by other rules, that are deaf to all the songs of *Sirens*, and have the prudence to valu a seasonable reproof before the most extravagant Panegyric: but this is owing to that Humility which I am now recommending, without which 'tis as impossible for greatness to be proof against flattery, as it is for a Pinnace with spreading sails, and a violent gust of wind, to sail steddily without ballast. And the frequent want of this is it which makes it no less frequent to see those unevennesses, and inequalities in behavior; those partialities in dispensing even the commonest civilities, which *I* have now represented.

16. AND sure 'tis none of the meanest attributes due to that excellent vertu of Humility that it can thus fix and poise the mind, cure those vertigo's and giddy humors, incident to those who are mounted aloft: and above all, that it is a sure

antidote against the most insinuating poison of Flattery, an holy spell or amulet against the venom of a Parasite, which the Philosopher justly calls the worst of tame beasts, as a Detractor is of wild: He being indeed a kind of vulture, in the way of seizure no less then ravine, who first picks out the eies of that which he designs to prey upon, suffering not the person concern'd, to see any thing of that destruction which he is to feel. And certainly none of the ominous birds, no night-raven or screech-owl can abode half so dismally as these domestic birds of prey, which are not only presages, but instruments of ruin wheresoever they haunt.

17. 'Tis therefore the universal concern of those that are great and prosperous, to chase them away; as *Abraham* did the Fowls from his Sacrifice, Gen. 15. 11. but yet more peculiarly so of those to whom fortune has given a sudden rise, and unexpected grandour, they being of all others the most obnoxious to this sort of Harpies. The surprizes of prosperity do no less disturb the judgment then those of Adversity: and as one who is in an instant snatcht up to some high Tower, is so amazed to see himself there, that he has no just mesure of the altitude, but thinks every thing farther below him then it is: so they that ascend to greatness by swift and rapid motions, have their heads so turned, that they are apt to overvalu it, and to look with contemt on those who before perhaps they thought worth their envy. And on a mind thus prepared, flattery may make

any impressions, it suborning even Providence as a witness on its side, and inferring from the Dignities obtained, the transcending merit of the obtainer: a piece of Sophistry which the slightest observer may easily confute, all Ages giving instances of those whose Vices have preferred them, and by a strange Chymistry have extracted Honor out of infamous acts. Yet to a mind possest with its own admiration, this shall pass for a demonstration: so trecherous a thing is Pride, that it combines with all who design to cheat us. And indeed 'tis not only an accessary, but the principal; none being in danger by others flatteries, who are not first seduced by their own.

18. It will therefore be a point of Wisdom for all Persons of Honor to encrease their caution with their fortune; and as they multiply their Retinues without, so especially to inforce their Guard within, that they become not slaves to their own Greatness, fix not themselves in such a posture of State, as to become immovable to all the offices of Humanity and Civility; not think that their admission to Greatness is upon the same terms on which the Jews were wont to receive their Proselytes, that they must renounce all their former relations; but to remember that they differ no more from others then as a counter set in the place of thousands or hundreds, do's from one set in the place of tens or units. A little transposition may quite alter the case; or however when they are all taken off the score, they

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are then indiscriminatly tumbled together, and one has no precedence of another, either in place or valu. So undiscernible will be the difference between the greatest Queen, and the meanest Servant, when Death, that great Leveller, shall have mixt them; there will be no inquisition in the Grave who came embalmed, or perfumed thither: And, as a Learned man says, the Ulcers of *Lazarus* will make as good dust as the Paint of *Jezebel*.

19. But I shall be thought to have out-run my Subject, or instead of that amiable Image of Affability, and universal Obligingness, the great Ornament of Life, introduce the grim figure of Death, that sullen Executioner, whom no Gifts, no Praiers can mollifie. Yet I cannot yield it wholly impertinent; for, as its final stroke cures all the infirmities of the body, so the foresight and contemplation of it is as much a Catholicon for all the maladies of the mind; especially that of Insolence and Disdain. For sure they cannot much pride themselves in any exaltation, that remember they must finally fall into the dust: nor arrogantly despise others, who consider that themselves shall one day be insulted over by worms and insects. Such mental descents into the vault or charnel-house, are the best disciplines for the demeanor in other places, according to the admonition of the Wise man, *Remember thy end, and thou shalt never do amiss.*

SECT.

SECT. V.

Of Piety.

1. LASTLY, To compleat and crown all other Excellencies, nothing is so proper, so necessary as Piety and Devotion. This is the salt which seasons all Sacrifices; yea, the Altar which sanctifies the Gift, no good (how splendid soever in the sight of man) being acceptable to God, till it be thus consecrated, and have this seal of the Sanctuary upon it. This is a Vertu truly Divine, as well in its original as its end; for as it comes from Heaven, (is an affiation of the blessed Spirit) so it tends thither also, and thither raises its Votaries. This is it which sublimates and spiritualizes Humanity, defecates and refines it from all the dregs of mortality, and so wings our earthly lumpish nature, that we can soar aloft to the region of spirits, and by its raptures make som essay of that state of separation, even while we are linked to the body. This is it which combines us so with God, that we have the same interests, the same choices; nay it do's in a sort communicate and enterchange properties with him; the all-Powerful God seems impotent and unable to resist its influence, whilst it invests us feeble wretches in a kind of Omnipotence, by engaging him for us who can do all things.

2. Now

2. NOW this Piety may be considered either in a larger, or more limited sense: in the former 'tis as wide as the whole scheme of Duty, not confined to any one act, but extended to all the commands of God. For as the animal Spirit diffuses its self into all the most distant members of the body; so this more vital Principle has as universal an influence on the mind, stamps that with such an admiration and reverence of God, such a love and complacency in him, that every act is (at least habitually) design'd to obey and glorifie him.

3. IN the more limited sense, Piety is taken for our more immediate entercourse with God, in things purely divine, as Adorations, Praiers, Aspirations, and all pantings and breathings of the soul after him; and in this notion 'tis more particularly called Devotion. And this is comprehended in the other, as a part in the whole; nay indeed, as an effect in its cause; for where Piety has not first formed and modelled the soul, there can be no true Devotion. External forms of it there may be, but that is but ceremony and pageantry, the most submissive prostrations are there but like that of *Dagon* before the Ark, the fall of a liveless trunk; the most elevated eies but a kind of convulsive motion, and the most rigid mortifications, bnt like the cuttings and launcings of *Baal's* Priests. Of this the very Heathen had som notion, and therefore in their worships had many preparatory ceremonies of lustra-

luſtration, and purifying, as being conſcious of the incongruity, that unholy Perſons ſhould be admitted to Sacred things. And accordingly *Socrates* has excellently (I had almoſt ſaid Evangelically) defined, *the beſt way of worſhipping God*, to be *the doing what he commands.* Indeed without this, our Devotion is meer ſtratagem and deſign: we invoke God as we uſe to cajole men, only to ſerve a preſent turn; and of ſuch diſingenious addreſſes, 'tis eaſy to read the event, or if we cannot, *Solomon* will inſtruct us, *Prov.* 15. 8. *The Praiers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

4. To treat of the ſeveral branches of Piety in the firſt notion, is not agreeable to the intended brevity of this Treatiſe; nor neceſſary, becauſe there are ſo many diſtinct Tracts extant on that Subject; yet I ſhall the more cloſely to adapt it to my female Readers, obſerve the propriety of it to women, not only as it is their greateſt Ornament and Advantage, but eſpecially as they have ſomwhat more of prediſpoſition towards it in their native temper. God's Laws, which are the rule of Piety, have this common with mens, that they are inforced upon us by the propoſals both of Puniſhments and Rewards, by that means engaging two of our moſt ſenſible paſſions, Fear and Love; and the female Sex being eminent for the pungency of both theſe, they are conſequently the better prepared for the impreſſions of Religion.

5. THIS is so much acknowledged, that our masculine Atheists make an ill use of it, and are willing to think that Religion ow's its force only to the impotence of the subject on which it works, that 'tis only an imposition upon the easy credulity of women, and are content to allow them the inclosure of it: wherein, tho they sufficiently shew their contemt of Piety, yet they unawares give a greater honor to that Sex then they intend, whilst they confess it more capable of an assimilation to the supreme Goodness, and of the renewal of God's Image (for to that all Piety is design'd) then their own. And therefore women have so little reason to be ashamed, that they ought to glory in the concession, and gratefully to celebrate the goodness of God to them, who, as he brings light out of darkness, so converts their natural infirmities into a means of spiritual strength, makes the impotencies and defects of their nature subservient to the operation of Grace; and by consecrating their very Passions, makes even those Gibeonites serviceable to the Tabernacle. But then 'tis to be remembred, that the greater is their obligation to comply with this design of Gods, to let their passions run in the channel he has cut for them; so to confine their Fear and Love to spiritual Objects, that they make no inordinate eruptions to any thing else, but in all their estimations of things dreadful or desirable, to give still the just deference to that which is eternal.

6. AND

6. AND, as Women in General have this advantage towards Piety, and obligation to it; so particularly those of Quality, who we may suppose to have generally a more early institution and instruction in it then those of a meaner rank: and besides, have afterwards more opportunities of being built up in the knowledg of their duty, and (by the help of an ingenious education) clearer apprehensions to discern it; and when they do so, have greater obligations to perform it, both in respect of God, of others, and themselves.

7. IN respect of God they have the greatest tie of gratitude, not only for the common mercies which they partake with the rest of mankind, but for those peculiar, by which they are differenced from others; of which, if they want a just valu, let them ask themselves how willing they would be to part with them, how she that has fed delicatly, would like to be desolate in the street, or *she that has bin brought up in Scarlet, to embrace the Dunghill*, Lam. 4. 5. and according to the averfion they find to such a change, let them estimate their present enjoiment, and the thankfulness it exacts.

8. Secondly, in regard of others, their Piety backt with their secular advantages, may be of a more extensive benefit; they have many opportunity of doing good by their influence on others; or if no way else, yet the splendor of their example, will by the eminency of their conditions

ſhine (as a light on ſom high Tower) more perſpicuouſly and guide many into the ſame path of Vertu. And certainly 'tis no ſmall obligation that lies on them in this reſpect; for God, who do's nothing without an end worthy of his Wiſdom, can never be thought to have ſelected ſom perſons as the objects of his bounty, meerly that they may ſwill and glut themſelves with ſenſual pleſures. No doubtleſs, he that is the great Maſter of the Univerſe, diſpoſes all things for common benefit; and therefore, if He have placed ſom in an higher Orb then others, it is that they may have an auſpicious influence on thoſe below them; and if they fail in this, they are no longer Stars but Comets, things of ominous and unlucky abode to all about them. I might enlarge on this Subject, but having don it already in the Gentlemans Calling, I ſuppoſe it unneceſſary, ſince that part is equally adapted to both Sexes.

9. In the laſt place, they have all obligation to Piety, in reſpect of themſelves, and that in two conſiderations; the firſt, of their preſent danger; the ſecond, of their final account. For their danger, 'tis evident they do not more outnumber their inferiors in any thing then in the opportunities, nay ſollicitations to ſin. Wealth and Honor have many ſnares, and which is worſe, do often diſpoſe the mind to ſuch an heedleſs ſecurity, that it takes no care to avoid them: and as in the body, the diſeaſes of repletion are far more numerous then thoſe of emtineſs, ſo the mind

mind is oftner vitiated by Affluence and Prosperity, then by *I*ndigence and Adversity. *I*t becomes therefore those who are so surrounded with enemies to fortifie themselves: and that they can no way do, but by a sincere Piety, that *whole Armor of God* which the Apostle describes, *Eph.* 6. 13. *by which alone they may repell all the darts of temtations*; nay not only ward the blow, but wrest the weapon out of Satans hand, so that when he urges to them the opportunities, the impunity which their wealth and greatness gives them to be had, they may retort his argument, and by a wholsomer inference collect thence their great obligation to be good; and that not only upon the score of Gratitude (tho that were enough to an ingenious soul) but in the second place of *I*nterest also, in respect of that account they must finally give. For tho God be not an unjust exactor to reap where he has not sowed, yet he is not so negligently profuse, as to do that which no prudent man will do, scatter his goods promiscuously, without taking notice where they fall; but as he dispences all things by a particular Providence, so he do's it to a particular end, and will exact as particular an account how that end has bin complied with.

10. I*t* is a smart exprobation of Gods to *Israel*, *Ezek.* 16, 17, 18, 19. that she had sacrilegiously emploied his *silver and gold*, *his oil*, *his flower and hony which he had given her in the service of her Idols*, by which as we may see he takes notice

notice how we disposse of our temporal possessions, so it shews us how the enditement will proceed against all those who so pervert their use. With what confusion must they appear at the great Audit who can give no other account of their receits, but that they consumed them upon their lusts, waged war against God with his own treasure, and bin as well thieves as rebels? What a Luciferian fall will they have from their honors, who have endevored to undermine Gods? thought themselves too great to pay him homage, and by their profane and vicious example, induced a contemt of him? In short, what a retaliation of inversions will there then be? those that have turned Grace into wantonness, converted his bounty into the fuel of their pride and luxury, shall then have their glory turn'd into shame, their riots and excesses into the want of a drop of water, and shall retain nothing of their greatness, but the guilt, the grating remembrance of having abused those temporal blessings, which if well managed, might have received them into everlasting habitations. How necessary then is it for all who have receiv'd so much upon account, to be often reflecting on it, examining what charges the great owner has imposed upon so ample an income? what God requires of them for whom he hath don so much? And this is particularly the business of Piety, which in all the forementioned respects, is as the usefullest, so the noblest accomplishment of greatness,

II. AND

11. And such it hath bin accounted till this profane Age of ours, which has removed all the boundaries of the former, reverst even the instincts of nature, and will not leave us so much of Religion as had the very worst of Heathens. For how erroneous soever they were in the choice of their Deities, they alwaies honored and reverenc'd those they chose, committed most of their enormities in obedience not in affront to them: did not assign them votaries as *Jeroboam* did his Priests of the meanest of the people, but thought themselves dignified by their service, and esteemed it an infamy not to be pious. But alas now we adaies make other estimates, Religion is so abject, so contemtible a thing, as is thought fit to influence none that are great either in parts or quality: and therefore tho too many are willing to appropriate it to women, upon the first account, *as the Gospel is the foolishness of preaching*, 1 Cor. 1. 21. yet they make exceptions upon the latter, and are not willing to afford it any of the nobler Proselytes even of that Sex.

12. I doubt not there are many Lectures read to such, to fortifie them against all impressions of Piety, to raise out the common notion of a God, & in order to that to depose his Vicegerent within them, discard their conscience, that unmannerly inmate, which is still speaking what they have no mind to hear, and will be apt sometimes to question their grand principle, and tell them they have

have souls. And truly 'tis no wonder if the abetters of Atheism take this course; for since they have no solid foundation of truth or reason, 'tis but necessary they support their Party by Autority; the countenance and applause of great Persons, and God knows they have too much succeeded in the design. But, in the mean time, what security do they give for the truth of their pretensions? We know 'tis still required of those that will practice upon other peoples concerns, that they put in caution to secure the owner from damage. But alas, what gage can they give for a soul? Who can contrive a form of Indemnity where that is the thing hazarded?

13. 'Tis easy indeed for one of these Apostles of *Satan*, to tell a Lady that she has nothing to do but to indulge to her pleasure; that 'tis the extremest folly to be frighted from a present enjoiment, by a fear of I know not what future smart; that God, and Sin, and Hell, are but names, certain Mormos and Bug-bears conjur'd up by Divines, to work upon her fear, and abuse her credulity. This, and much more of this kind may be said, and I doubt often is; but all this while the question is begg'd; and a strong affirmation must pass for proof: for I defie all the Doctors of Atheism to make any demonstration of their Tenet; and yet, though they pretend to no Demonstration themselves, Religion must be condemned meerly for the

the want of it; that is for not making spiritual things liable to sense, for distinguishing between Belief and Science; which is indeed for doing the most unreasonable thing in the world, *viz.* the remitting every object to the trial of its proper faculty: and they who suspect it upon that account, may by the same kind of Logic wrangle us out of all our senses, may perswade us we hear nothing because the eie discerns not sounds, that we tast not, because the ear understands not gusts and sapors, and so on to the rest.

AND yet this is the bottom of those Arguments which the great pretenders to Reason make against Religion; and in the mean time have so little ingenuity as to exclaim on the light credulity of fools and women, that embrace the dictates of faith, whilst at the same instant they exact a more implicit assent to their negative Articles, their no Religion. A strange magisterial confidence so to impose on this Age, what is so universally contradictory to all former, and to the common verdict of mankind. For 'tis observable thro all the successions of men, that there were never any society, any collective body of Atheists. A single one perhaps might here and there be found (as we see sometimes monsters or misshapen births) but for the generality they had always such instincts of a Deity, that they never thought they ran far enough from Atheism; but rather chose to multiply their Gods, to have too many

then none at all: nay were apt to descend to the adoration of things below themselves, rather then to renounce the power above them. By which we may see that the notion of a God is the most indelible character of natural Reason, and therefore whatever pretence our Atheists make to ratiocination and deep discourse, it is none of that primitive fundamental reason coetaneous with our humanity; but is indeed a reason fit only for those who own themselves like the beasts that perish.

15. But admit we could be more bountiful to them, and allow their opinion an equal probability with our Faith, yet even this could never justifie any body in point of Prudence, that should adhere to them. Common discretion teaches us that where two propositions have an equal appearance of truth, there is no rational inducement to prefer one before the other, till we have examined the consequences, and find somthing in the one which may over-poise and outweigh the contrary. Now in all things that concern practice, there are no motives so considerable, either to invite or avert, as Advantage or Danger.

16. Let us apply this to the present case, and examin the pretensions of the Atheist and the Christian in both respects. But first we are to remember, that both Advantage and Danger are to be viewed under a double notion, either as present or as future. The former is the Atheists most proper subject, and indeed all he can pertinently

speak

speak to, who professes himself only a man of this world. Here he will tell us that the disbelief of God and another life, is the great enfranchiser of mankind, sets us at liberty from that thraldom, those Bonds wherewith our superstitious fears had fetter'd us, that it supersedes all those nice and perplexing inquiries of lawful and unlawful, and reduces all our inquisitions only to this one, how we shall most please our selves. The glutton need not put a knife to his throat, but is only to put an edg upon his palate. The drunkard need not refrain his cups, but only take care that they be filled with the most delicious liquor. The wanton need not pull out his eie, but only contrive to possess what that tempts him to desire; and in a word none of our appetites need be restrain'd, but satisfied. And this uncontrol'd licentiousness, this brutish liberty, is that *summum bonum*, that supreme happiness which they propose to themselves, and to which they invite others.

17. On the other side the Christian is not without his claim to a present advantage, tho of a far differing nature: he is not so preposterous as to think it a preferment to sink below his kind; to aspire to an assimilation with meer animals, which is the utmost the former amounts to, but he proposes to himself the satisfaction of a man; those delights which may entertain his Reason not his Sense, which consist in the rectitude of a well inform'd Mind. His Religion is the perfectest Scheme of Morality, and makes him a Philoso-

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pher without the help of the Schools, it teaches him the art of subduing his appetites, calming his passions, and in a word makes him Lord of himself; and by that gives him all the pleasures which result from such a soveraignty. Nor is he totally void even of the pleasures of sense, which in many instances are greater to him then to those that most court them. Temperance cooks his coursest diet to a greater gust, then all their studied mixtures; Chastity makes one lawful embrace more grateful to him, then all the nauseating variety of their unbounded lusts; and Contentment swells his mite into a talent, makes him richer then the *Indies* would do if he desired beyond them. Nor is it a contemtible benefit that his Moderation gives him an immunity from those sensitive pains which oft bring up the rear of inordinate sensual pleasures. So that his condition even set in the worst light, in that very particular wherein the Atheist most triumphs over him, is not so deplorable as 'tis represented.

18. But if it were, he has pleasures that would infinitly overwhelm that smart, and that not only in his reason (as hath bin said before) but in his more sublime diviner part, such irradiations from above, such antepasts of his future bliss, such acquiescence in a calm & serene conscience, as is very cheaply bought with all he can suffer here. I know the profane laugh at these things as Chimera's and the illusions of a prepossessed fancy (& truly if they were so, they might yet come in balance with many

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of their pleſures which are as much owing to opinion and imagination:) but if we conſider what ſupports they have given under the heavieſt preſſures, how they enabled the primitive Martyrs, not only to ſuffer, but even to court all that is formidable to human nature, we cannot think that a meer phantaſtic imaginary joy could deceive the ſenſe of ſuch real, ſuch acute torments. And tho in this great declination of Zeal, there be perhaps few that can pretend to thoſe higher degrees of ſpiritual raptures, yet certainly were the votes of all devout perſons collected, they would all concur in this teſtimony, that even in the common offices of Piety, the ordinary diſcharge of a good Conſcience, there is an infinitly greater complacence, a higher guſt and reliſh then in all the pleſures of Senſe. But of this the moſt irrefragable witneſſes are thoſe who from great voluptuaries have turned devotes; and I dare appeal to their experience, whether of the two ſtates is the moſt pleſant. I wiſh thoſe who will not believe this on others words, would themſelves make the trial, and till they do ſo they are notoriouſly unjuſt to pronounce that a fiction, of whoſe reality they refuſe to make proof.

19. BY what hath bin ſaid, ſom eſtimate may be made which bids faireſt (the Atheiſt or Chriſtian) as to preſent temporal felicity: but alas what an allay, what a damp is it to felicity to ſay 'tis temporal; yet we may give it a term below that, and ſay 'tis momentary. For ſince our life is

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ſo, nothing that depends on that can be otherwiſe, and yet in this ſhallow bottom the irreligious embark their all. For, as to all future advantage, 'tis their Principle to diſclaim it, they diſcern *no reward for blameleſs ſouls*, Wiſd. 2. 22. So that in this particular the Chriſtian do's not compare with, but triumph over them. *He knows that if his earthly houſe of this Tabernacle be diſſolved, he hath a building of God; an Houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens*, 2 Cor. 5. 1. That when he parts with his life, he do's not reſign his happineſs, but ſhall receive it infinitly improved both in degree and duration. And now certainly 'tis viſible enough which opinion propoſes the fairer hopes, and conſequently which (ſuppoſing but an equal probability of truth) is the moſt inviting.

20. BUT ſom ſpirits there are ſo ignoble, that the moſt glorious Prize cannot animate them; that like a ſwine, the muſcles of whoſe eies, they ſay, permit him not to look upwards, is not concerned in all the felicities above, but would at a venture reſign his ſhare in thoſe, ſo he may ſecurely enjoy his huſk and draff. But yet even thoſe who are uncapable of the more generous reſentments, may be apt enough to the more ſervile; and danger may fright, tho glory cannot allure them. It concerns ſuch therefore to compare the miſchiefs which each Opinion threatens to their oppoſits, and from thence make an eſtimate which is ſafeſt to be choſen. And here let

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the Atheist himself cast up the account of the dangers consequent to Christianity, and it can all amount but to this, the deprivation (or rather moderation) of som present sensual Pleasures, or the incurring of som present sensitive Pains; the former in the daily exercise of Temperance, and Mortification; the latter, (more rarely and oftner in purpose then act) the suffering for Righteousness sake. And both these the Christian ballances, nay out-weighs by two more important present hazards on the other side. To the former, he opposes the danger of being enslaved to the brutish part of a mans self, a thing so deplorable even in the judgment of humanity, that all Writers of Ethics have uniformly declared no servility to be so sordid and intolerable, as that of the vicious man to his Passions and Lusts. To the latter, he confronts the mischief of being a slave to every man else; for such he certainly is, whom the fear of suffering can baffle out of any thing he thinks just and honest. For if all the men in the World could successively have the power to afflict him, they would also have to command and rule him; and what can be more abject, more below the dignity of human nature, then to have a spirit alwaies prepared for such a servitude? Besides, even the utmost sufferings which Christianity can at any time require, is outvied daily by the effects of Luxury and Rage; and for one that has opportunity to be a Martyr for his God, thousands become so to their Vices.

21. It

21. If from the present we look forward to future dangers, the Atheist must here be perfectly silent; he cannot say that the Christian after this life shall be in any worse estate then himself, since he concludes they shall both be the same nothing: but the Christian threatens him with a more dismal state. He allows him indeed a being, yea an eternal one; but it is only such as qualifies him for a misery as eternal; the worm that never dies, the fire unquenchable, where all the excesses of his short Pleasures shall be revenged with more excessive, endless Torments: his senses which were here the only Organs of his felicity, shall then be (tho not the only) the very sensible mediums of his wretchedness; and that Conscience, which he here suspended from its office, shall then take out its arrears, and return all its stifled admonitions in perpetual horrors, and desperate upbraidings. I need not now sure ask on which side the greater danger lies.

22. To conclude, the result of all is, that the transitory Pleasures of the Atheist are over-poised even by the present Satisfactions of the Pious. And the eternity of unbounded, unconceivable joies he expects hereafter, comes in *ex abundanti*, having nothing on the other side that offers at a competition with it. And at the very same rate of Proportion we have seen the dangers also are so, that we can easily compute the utmost mischief our Christianity can do us, if it should be false; but the damage of the other is inestimable, both

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for the penalty of Loss and Sense. I may now appeal to common Prudence to judg of the vast inequality, and to pronounce, that sure there had need be som great evidence of truth on the Atheists side, to preponderate all these disadvantages. Indeed, nothing much below a demonstration can justify the choice of so dangerous Principles; I am sure an equal probability can never do it, where the danger is so unequal; and were the veriest Atheist consulted in a secular case of the like circumstances, he would certainly pronounce him a mad man that should make such an election. How desperate a phrensy then is it to do it, without so much as that equal probability: nay indeed, without any probability at all? And yet this madness sets up for the monopoly not of Wit only, but Reason too; and by confidence and clamor, seeks to run down those Arguments it can never confute.

23. I may be thought here to have made too long a digression from my proper Subject, but I cannot confess it so; for since my present business is to recommend Piety, I can no way do that so effectually as by shewing its consonancy to right reason, especially considering the busie industry now used to represent it under another form, and to alienate from it those persons whose Greatness may give it any lustre or repute in the World; of which sort I suppose there are few more frequently attaqued then Women of Quality, that converse among those who call them-

themſelves the Wits of the Age; who living in ſo infectious an air, had need of ſom antidotes about them; and if what I have now offered, appear not forcible enough, (for it pretends not to the tith of what may be ſaid on the Subject) yet it may at leaſt do them this ſervice, to put them in mind of what they need, and ſend them to the fuller diſpenſatories of others.

24. AND that is the thing I ſhould earneſtly beg of them, that they would be ſo juſt to their own intereſt, as not to combine with ſeducers againſt themſelves; but if they have bin ſo unhappy as to lend one ear to them, yet at leaſt not to give up both to be forced in a ſlaviſh ſubmiſſion to their dictates, but hear what may be ſaid on the other ſide. And ſure 'tis but a low compoſition for God thus to divide with *Satan*, yet 'tis that of which his Emiſſaries are ſo jealous that 'tis one of their grand Maxims, that none who profeſſes Divinity is to be adviſed with; and therefore by all Arts they are to be rendred either ridiculous, or ſuſpected; to which methinks may be applied that Fable (which *Demoſthenes* once recited to the *Athenians*, when *Alexander* demanded of them to deliver up their Orators) of the Wolves and the Sheep, who coming to a Treaty, the firſt Article of the Wolves was, that the Sheep ſhould give up their maſtives which guarded them: the reſemblance is too obvious to need a minute application.

25. BUT

25. BUT this is manifeſtly to reverſe all former Rules, and to truſt a man rather in any Faculty then his own, and would never have prevailed in any thing but where the ſoul is concern'd, that poor deſpicable thing whereon alone we think fit to make experiments. 'Tis ſure, that if any ſhould diſpute their title to an earthly Poſſeſſion, they would not ſo tamely reſign it, nor would truſt their own ſelves in its defence, but would conſult their ableſt Lawyers, and, by them, ſift out every circumſtance that might eſtabliſh their claim. Why ſhould they then ſuffer themſelves to be talk'd out of an Heavenly Inheritance, without ſo much as once propoſing their doubts to thoſe whoſe ſtudy and profeſſion it is to reſolve them? But as in all other ills, ſo in this, prevention is better then cure; and therefore to thoſe that are yet untainted, the ſecureſt courſe will be to ſtop both ears againſt all profane inſinuations, and to uſe thoſe who temt them to be diſloial to their God, that ſpiritual adultery, as they ſhould do thoſe who ſolicit them to the carnal, not ſo much as to enter parly, but with the greateſt indignation deteſt and reject them. 'Tis the ſaying of the Wiſe man, *Prov.* 25. 23. that *an angry countenance driveth away a back-biting tongue.* And certainly, would Great Perſons look ſeverely on ſuch defamers of Religion, they would give ſom check to that impudence of profaneneſs which has given it ſuch a vogue in the World.

26. AND

26. And sure this is much their Duty to do, if they own any relation to that God who is so dishonored. They would think it a very disingenious thing to sit by to hear a Friend or Benefactor reviled, and expres no displesure, and is God so friendless among them, that only his traducers and blasphemers can be patiently heard? Among the Jews, at the hearing of any Blasphemy, they rent their clothes; but I fear we have som of our nice Dames that would be much more concern'd at a rip in their garment, then at the rending and violating God's Sacred Name; and could more patiently behold the total subversion of Religion, then the disorder or misplacing of a lock or riband. But 'tis to be hoped there are not many so impious, and those that are not, will surely think themselves obliged with all their power, to discountenance all the Fautors of irreligion, whether they be the solemn sedater sort that would argue, or the jollier that would railly them out of their Faith.

27. But when they have thus provided against the assaults of others, and secured the speculative part of Religion, they have only established a Judicatory against themselves, stored up matter of Conviction and Accusation, if they answer it not in the practic. I must therefore after this long excursion, return to my first Point, and beseech them seriously to weigh the obligations they have to Piety in the general notion of it, as it comprehends all the duties of a Christian life;

life; of which as I intend not to speak particularly, so I know not where to find a better summary, then that which S. *James* has drawn up, *Chap. 1. vers.* 27. *Pure Religion and undefiled before God even the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

28. But besides this general, there is (as I said before) another more restrained notion of Piety, as it relates to our more immediat entercourse with God in divine Ordinances and Worship, in which respect it commonly passes under the name of Devotion, and thus consider'd it has a great propriety to the female Sex. For Devotion is a tender Plant, that will scarce root in stiff or rocky ground, but requires a supple gentle soil, and therefore the feminine softness and pliableness is very apt and proper for it. And accordingly there have bin very eminent growths of it in that Sex. I need not heap up examples of former Ages, but rather perswade this to leave som at least to the following; and the more considerable the persons are, the more conspicuous will be the Example, which seems the more to adapt it to those I now speak to. Devotion in a Cloister is as recluse as the Votary, a light rather under a bushel then on a candlestick: and in an obscure Cottage 'tis either not observed, or else thought to be but the effect of destitution and secular wants, a reserve rather then a choice: but when those who are in the eie of the world, the most eminent Actors on

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the Theater of human life, shall chuse the part of a Saint, when those who want none of the divertisments or blandishments of earth, shall have their conversation in Heaven, this recommends it to the Spectators, as the true and greatest object of human choice; since 'tis chosen by those who know the utmost pretence of all its competitors.

29. Nor is devotion only more excellent in them in regard of its effects, but 'tis also more necessary in respect of their obligation. Devotion is an abstraction from the world, and therefore cannot in any eminent degrees, be practised by those whose necessities or business do much entangle them in it. So that from such, a far less proportion will be accepted, then from those, whose plenty and ease give them no other want but that of employment. And certainly if there be any of whom that can truly be said; women of quality are the persons: for they in this respect exceed even men of the like rank: for the men are often engaged in public employments, and must lend most of their time to the use of others; or however all have the care of their own privat affairs, the managery of their fortunes to employ them. But of women the utmost that is ordinarily required, is but a little easie inspection within their own walls, the oversight of a few children, and servants, and even from this how many are by their condition of life exemted; and how many more do by their niceness and delicacy exemt them-

themselves? And surely so perfect a vacancy is neither happy nor safe. And therefore God who projects we should be both, never design'd it for any of mankind: but where he gives so much liberty from secular, he expects a greater diligence in spiritual employments.

50. AND indeed 'tis an amazing thing to see, that any into whom he has breathed the breath of life, on whom he has stamped the image of his own eternity, can think those immortal souls were given them only to serve the mean and abject uses of their corruptible bodies, (for which the soul of the dullest Animal would have don as well;) that eating and drinking, sleep and recreations, which are only useful to the supporting us in this world, are the only things for which we were sent hither. And yet if we may measure their opinions by their practice, this seems to be the perswasion of many of our female Gentry, who look upon it as a degrading, a kind of attainder of their blood, to do any thing but please their senses. An error sure of the most pernicious consequence imaginable. We know a Lady of pleasure is in one sense a very scandalous Epithet, and truly 'tis no very laudable one in the other, nay which is worse, they are often coincident, and fall in with each other. She whose sole universal aim is pleasure, will not think her self much out of her road, in the pursuit of any particular. And she that thinks she lives for no other purpose, will so often be at a loss for innocent pleasure, that she is almost under a necessi-

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ty to call in the nocent, to serve the very end (as she supposes) of her being. But indeed were they sure to confine themselves to such as are harmless in their kind, yet the excess of them renders them sinful, and the doting pursuit denominates them *lovers of Pleasures more then lovers of God*, a character so black that the Apostle compleats his Catalogue of the worst vices of the worst times with it, 1 *Tim.* 3. 4.

31. It is therefore the great goodness of God to design a rescu for those whose condition exposes them to that danger, and by exacting a liberal expence of time in their devotion, divert them from lavishing both it and their souls together. Neither do's he by this defeat their aim of a pleasant life, but rather assist it: for whereas sensual delights are vagrant, and must be chased thro a hundred turnings and wild Mazes, the spiritual are fixt, and one may alwaies know where to find them. How often are the voluptuous in pain to know which pleasure to choose? like a surfeited stomac the greater variety is set before it, the more it nauseats all. What difficulties hath a Lady many times to resolve whether an afternoon shall be spent at the Court, or at the Theater; whether in dancing or at cards, in giving or receiving visits, as not knowing which will best please her? But she that knows the delights of Devotion, knows withall that there is no other fit to come in competition with it; and so is not distracted in her choice, nor need go farther then her Closet for

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the most agreable entertainment. I know this will sound a little incredible to those that know no other use of Closets then as a conservatory of gauds and baubles; that aspire to no plesure there above that of children, the playing with the Pictures and Popets that adorn it. Nor indeed do I pretend that such shall find those satisfactions I speak of. Those whose errand is to *Beelzebub* the God of flyes, must not expect to be treated by the God of *Israel*. An ingenious man will scorn to obtrude himself on those who desire not his company, and sure God will not make himself more cheap. Those that will meet him in their Closets, must come with that design, resort thither as to an Oratory; nay more then so, they must come frequently. Spiritual joies know not the way to a place where they are not often invited and as man seek for each other not in places where they seldom or never come, but where they daily frequent; so God contrives, not to meet us in that place where we appear rarely and accidentally, but where we usually resort.

32. I shall not need to branch out devotion into the several parts, that being don already in a multitude of other Treatises, of which if they please to consult any one, they cannot want a Directory for their worship, whether privat or public. Only let me observe the order and connexion of those two, that they are neither to be sever'd nor yet to be ranged preposterously. The privat must not justle out the public, for God expects his

solemn homage: and their hudling it up in privat, as it may give men Ground to suspect they pay none at all; so neither God nor man can collect any thing better from it, then that they are asham-ed of the Deity they pretend to serve. On the other side the public must as little swallow up the privat, and where it does, there may be a just doubt of its sincerity. Many attractives there may be to Church besides that of Piety, and indeed where that is really the motive, it teaches so much reve-rence to that awful presence they are to approch, as not to come without som preparation. What solicitude, what critical niceness will a Lady have for her dress, when she is to appear at a solemn meeting at Court, and shall she take no care how fordidly, how undecently she appear when the King of Kings gives audience? Shall many hours, daies, nay perhaps weeks, be taken up in contri-ving for the one, and shall there never be a minute allotted for the other? This were sure very une-qual, and yet this is the case where the devotion of the Closet do's not prepare for that of the Church. If the mind be not first tuned there, it will be very ill qualified for that harmony of souls, which is the only thing God regards in our public offices. So that were there no other use of privat devotion, but as it relates to the public, that were enough to speak the necessity of it.

35. But indeed 'tis not only a needful prepa-rative to that sacred commerce, but to our civil.

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The World is but a larger sort of Pesthouse, in every corner of it we meet with infectious airs, and those that converse in it had need of this Antidote. How many temtations do's every place, every hour, every interview, present to the shocking even of that moral integrity which a sober Heathen would judg fit to preserve; much more of that strict Piety our Christianity exacts?

34. 'Twas the observation that *Origen* made of himself, that the day in which he so shamefully fell by sacrificing to Idols, he had ventured out in the morning before he had compleated his usual praiers; the Devil finding him so unarmed took advantage to assault him, as knowing he had then but a single impotent man to wrestle with, who had forfeited, by not invoking, the protection of God. And indeed since praier is the most powerful exorcism to eject him, we may well conclude, the omission of it is a likely means to invite him; for if God have not the prepossession, if we do not by hearty praier surrender our souls to him in the morning, they are then all the day after like that emty house mention'd in the Gospel, a fit receptacle for as many evil spirits as please to inhabit there. Nor are these spiritual the only dangers that attend us, we are liable to multitude of secular ones also: our persons, our fortunes, our reputations, every thing wherein we can receive a benefit, renders us equally capable of a prejudice. What multitudes of accidents are there to which we lie open, and nothing to guard us

from them but the divine Providence? which if we neglect to solicit we are sure very unworthy of its defence. And this is a consideration that methinks should bring even the most sensual person upon their knees: for tho too many may be found that despise the former danger, and can contentedly enough expose their souls, yet such are usually the most tender of their temporal concerns, it being commonly the excessive love of those which makes them neglect the other. She that fears not the fall into sin, will yet fear the tumbling into a precipice, and tho she care not for the sporting of her innocence, would be very loth any accident should blemish her face, disparage her fame, or impoverish her fortune, and yet from any or all of these she is utterly unable to guard herself. So that if Piety will not, yet interest methinks should render her an homager to that omnipotent power from whence alone she can derive her safety.

35. And now methinks a Duty that is thus bound on with the cords of a man, with human as well as divine perswasives, should not easily be shaken off. I wish I could say it never is, but I fear there are som of those I now speak to, who neglect it in spight of all these inducements; who tho they can pretend nothing serious enough to own the name of business, do yet suffer a succession of I know not what impertinencies to divert them. And indeed were the expence of som Ladies daies calculated, we should find every hour so full of emtiness, so overladen with vanities, that

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'tis scarce imaginable where an office of devotion should croud in.

36. THE morning is divided between sleep and dressing, nor would the morning suffice, but that they are fain to make a new computation to measure it, not by the Sun, but by their time of dining, which is often as late as the stationary hours of the Primitive Fasts, tho upon a far differing motive. The afternoons being by this means reduced, are too short for those many divertisements that await them, and must therefore borrow as much of the night as they lent to the morning. And when the meer fatigue of pleasures send a Lady to her rest, 'tis not imaginable that she will permit Devotion to induce a yet greater, and more-disagreeable lassitude, so that the whole round of her time seems to be a kind of magic circle, wherein nothing that is holy must appear. And indeed 'tis none of the highest stratagems of *Satan* thus to forestal their time; and by a perpetual supply of diversions, insensibly steal from them the opportunities of divine Offices; an artifice by which I presume he prevails on som, who would startle at his grosser and more apparent temtations.

37. NOR needs he more then the success of this project; for if this habitual neglect of Piety should not finally end in great and criminal commissions, (as 'tis naturally very apt to do) yet his interest is sufficiently secured by such a customary omission, which amounts to no less then the

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living *without God in the World*: a ſtate ſo hopeleſs, that when the Apoſtle recollects to the Epheſians the wretchedneſs of their Gentile State, he do's it in thoſe very words, *Eph.* 2. 12. And ſure, thoſe that live ſo under Chriſtianity, are not in a better, but worſe condition, by how much contemt of God is more unpardonable then ignorance.

38. It therefore infinitly concerns thoſe who are in danger of ſo fatal a ſnare, to look about them, and endevor to countermine *Satan*, and be as induſtrious to ſecure their duty, as he is to ſupplant it; and to this purpoſe, one of the uſefulleſt expedients I know, is to be aforehand with him; I mean, to make their Devotions the firſt buſineſs of the day; by which I intend not only thoſe Ejaculations wherewith we all ſhould open our eies, but their more ſet and ſolemn Praiers; a Practice ſo highly expedient to the perſons forementioned, that it falls little ſhort of neceſſary; and that upon ſeveral reaſons.

39. FIRST, in relation to one of the great ends of Morning Praier, which is to ſupplicate the guidance and protection of God for the whole day. Now if this be not don till ſom Ladies Dreſſings be finiſhed, 'twill be half a mockery, a moſt prepoſterous requeſt, as to the greateſt part of the day, which will be paſt before; and beſides the abſurdity, there is danger in it; for all the preceding time is as it were outlawed by it, put from under the Divine Protection. Alas, are God's

God's safeguards to be only meridional, to shine out only with the noon-day Sun? Do they suppose *Satan* keeps their hours, and stirs not abroad till the afternoon, that there is no danger either of corporal or spiritual mischiefs before that time of the day? Certainly, if *the noise of the harp and the viol* which *Isaiah mentions*, Ch. 5. 12. do not drown it, they may often hear a morning as well as evening Passing-bell. With how many others do's the glass of life run out, whilst they are at their looking-glasses? How many bodies are maimed and wounded in the time they are trimming and decking theirs? And *who made them differ from others*, 1 Cor. 4. 7? Or what tenure have they in the safety of one moment, save what they ow to God's Providence? And what rational expectation can they have of that, when they do not invoke it?

40. NOR are the spiritual dangers less, but rather much more; and they must be very slight observers of themselves, if they do not discern that snares may be laid for them in their recesses in their chambers, as well as in places of the most public resort. Indeed, were there no other then what relates to their dress, and curiosity thereof, it were enough to evidence their danger; scarce any part of that but carrying a temtation in it: to Pride, if it hit right, and please their fancy: to Anger and Vexation, if it do not. They had need therefore to put on their armor before their ornaments, by a prepossession of Praier and Meditation

ditation to secure their vitals, lest by an internal death of Grace, their bodies (in their utmost luster) prove but the painted Sepulcher of their souls.

41. IN the second place, this appears requisit in oppositon to the indecency and incongruity of the contrary. How inverted an estimate do they make of things that postpone the interests of their souls, to the meanest member of their bodies, pay a supererrogating attendance to the one, before the other comes at all into their care. But what is yet worse, how vile a contumely is offered to the Majesty of God, who is used as they do their dunning Creditors, posted off with an excuse of no leisure yet to speak with him; whilst in the mean time all the factors for their vanity can have ready access and full audience. God must attend till their Tailor, their Shoomaker please to dismiss them, and at the best, can be allowed only to bring up the rear of a whole shole of Artificers.

42. BUT thirdly, 'tis very doubtful whether he shall obtain so much from them; for it may often happen that he shall be quite precluded: so numerous are the parts of a modish equipage, and so exact a symmetry is required in the whole, that 'tis the business of many hours to compleat it; when as 'twas said of the Roman Ladies, a counsel must be called about the placing of an hair that sits irregularly, when one thing after another shall be tried, and again rejected, as not exact,

act, or not becoming; time all the while insensibly steals away, and tho that will not stay for them, yet dinner doth, and then their bellies begin to murmur to pay any longer attendance on their backs, and claim the next turn; and between these two competitors, 'tis odds Devotion will be quite excluded, or reduced only to a grace before meat: (and well if that, considering how unfashionable even that is grown.) In the mean time, what a wretched improvidence is it, to reduce the one necessary business of the day to such uncertainties, nay almost to a certain disappointment.

43. YET suppose this hazard were only imaginary, and a Lady were infallibly sure not to lose the time for her Praiers; yet in the fourth place, she will be likely by such preceding diversions to lose much of her zeal in them, so that if they be said at all, they will scarce be said in a due manner. There is alas such a repugnancy in our nature to any thing spiritual, that we cannot close in an instant; but as a benummed, frozen body will need som rubbing and chafing before it can be fit for motion; so our more frozen souls require som previous incitations before they can with any vigor exert themselves in Devotion. Now sure the dressing time (I mean such a dressing as we now suppose) is not very proper for such preparations. 'Tis, on the contrary, extreme apt to indispose and unfit them; for when the fancy is possest with so many little images of va-

nity, they will not eaſily be ejected. That ranging faculty is, God knows, too apt to bring in even the remoteſt diverſions; but when it has ſuch a ſtock ready at hand, how will it pour them in upon the mind, to the great allaying, if not utter extinguiſhing of Devotion.

44. WHEN all theſe conſiderations are put together, 'twill ſure appear wholſom counſel, that ſuch perſons ſhould not truſt ſo important a Duty to ſo many caſualties, but in the firſt place ſecure a time for that, repair to their Oratory before their dreſſing room, and by an early conſecration of themſelves to God, defeat *Satan's* claim, and diſcourage his attemts for the reſt of the day. We know there is a natural efficacy in a good beginning, towards the producing a good ending: but in ſpiritual things the influence is yet greater, becauſe it draws in Auxiliaries from above, and engages the yet farther aſſiſtances of Grace. Upon which account I am apt to believe, that where this Duty is ſincerely and fervently performed in the morning, it will not totally be neglected in the ſucceeding parts of the day. 'Twill be eaſy to diſcern the ſame obligation, the ſame advantage of cloſing the day with God, that there was to begin it; and when thoſe two boundaries are ſecured, when thoſe are lookt upon as ſtrict duty, and conſtantly obſerved, 'tis not unlikely but their Piety may grow generous, and with *David*, *Pſ.* 55. 17. add to the *evening and morning a noon-day office*; for where Devotion is real,

real, 'tis apt to be progreſſive; and the more we converſe with God, the more we ſhall deſire to do ſo. Thus we ſee how this little cloud like that of *Elijah*, 1 *King.* 18. 44. may *over-ſpread the Heavens*, and this handful of firſt-fruits may hallow the whole day.

45. NAY indeed, when it has advanced thus far, 'twill probably go farther, 'twill not keep it ſelf only on the defenſive part, but invade its oppoſits, get daily ground of thoſe vanities by which it was before oppreſt. For when a Lady has in her Cloſet waſht her cheeks with penitential tears, ſhe cannot ſure when ſhe comes out, think them prepared for the varniſh of the paint and fucus. When ſhe has attentively examined her Conſcience, that impartial mirror, and there diſcern'd all the blemiſhes of her nobler part, ſhe will ſure with ſomwhat a more cold concern conſult her looking-glaſs. And when ſhe has by pious vows and reſolutions *put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, *Rom.* 13. 14. 'twill be impoſſible for her to be very anxiouſly careful about her garments. This devout temper of her mind will by a holy *leger-demain* ſhuffle the Romances out of her hand, and ſubſtitute the Oracles of Truth; will not let her dream away her time in phantaſtic ſcenes, and elaborate nothing, but promt her *to give all diligence to make her Calling and Election ſure.* In a word, when ſhe once underſtands what it is to ſpend one hour devoutly, ſhe will endevor to reſcue all the reſt from trifles and impertinent en-

tertainments; and employ them to purpose more worthy the great end of her being. Thus may she almost insensibly wind her self out of the snare, disintangle her self from those temtations wherewith she was enwrapt; and by having her *heart so set at liberty, may run the waies of God's Commandments, Ps.* 119.

46. But Privat Devotion, tho of excellent effect, cannot commute for the omission of Public, nor indeed can it long maintain its vigor, unless sometimes cherished by the warmth of Christian Assemblies: and if God please to visit them in their Closets, they are (even by their own Laws of Civility) obliged to return his Visits, and attend him in his house. I fear too many adapt the instance in the Formality too, and come as unconcernedly to him as they do to one another. 'Tis true, those that pay him a cordial reverence at Home, will certainly do it at the Church; and therefore by the little we see performed by som there, we may doubt God sees as little in their Retirements. But what speak I of an hearty Reverence, when 'tis visible that there are those who pay none at all? How rare a sight is it for som Ladies to appear at Church? How many times (I had almost said hundreds) do we see their Coaches stand at the Play-house, for once at God's? They seem to own no distinction of dаies, unless it be, that Sunday is their most vacant season to take Physic, or to lie a-bed; and if such do ever come to Church, Devotion is like

to

to be the leaſt part of their errand. Some new garment perhaps or dreſs is to be ſhew'd, and that thought the place where the moſt critical Judges of thoſe things will be moſt at leſure to obſerve them: or if they come not to teach new faſhions, it may be they come to learn; and ſuch documents will be ſurer to be put in practice then any in the Sermon. Poſſibly they expect to ſee ſom friend or acquaintance there, and as if Chriſt were to be ſerved (as he was born) in an Inn, make his houſe the common rendezvouz in which to meet their Aſſociates. If they have any more ingenious attractives, 'tis commonly that of Curioſity, to hear ſome new celebrated Preacher, and that rather for his Rhetoric then his Divinity; and this Motive (tho the beſt of the ſet) is but like that which prevail'd with thoſe *Jews* St. *John* mentions, who came to *Jeſus that they might ſee Lazarus*, Jo. 12.

47. I ſhall not rank among theſe Motives, that of Hypocriſie and ſeeming Holineſs, for from that all the reſt do acquit them. Indeed 'tis the only ſin which this Age has ſeemed to reform, and that too only by way of *Antiperiſtaſis*, not by the Vertu but the Iniquity of the Times. Religion is grown ſo unfaſhionable, ſo contemtible, that none can now be temted to put on ſo ridiculous a diſguiſe. And altho as to ſingle perſons I confeſs Hypocriſie one of the deepeſt Guilts, ſuch as has a peculiar portion aſſign'd it by Chriſt in the place of torment, *Mat.* 24. 51. yet as to Communities,

I can-

I cannot but think it better to have a face of Religion then Profaneneſs. The example of the former may work beyond its ſelf, and the Form of Godlineſs in ſome may produce the Power of it in others; but a pattern of Profaneneſs, the farther it operates the worſe, and all the progreſs it can make, is from one wickedneſs to another, ſo that I fear as St. *Bernard* wiſht for his Feaver again, ſo the Church may ere long for her Hypocrites.

48. BUT to recal my ſelf from this digreſſion, let us a little enquire how thoſe, whom the foremention'd Motives bring to Church, behave themſelves there; and that is indeed with great conformity to the ends of their coming, their errand is not to be Suppliants, neither do they put themſelves in the poſture, kneeling is impertinent for them who mean not to pray, but as the Apoſtle deſcribes the Idolatrous ſervice of the *Iſraelites*, *They ſat down to eat and drink, and roſe up to play*, ſo theſe ſit down to talk and laugh with their Pew-fellows, and riſe up to gape and look about them. When they ſhould be confeſſing their ſins to Almighty God, they are apologizing (perhaps) to one another for the omiſſion of a ceremonious viſit, or ſom other breach of civility; when they ſhould be *obſerving the goings of God in the Sanctuary*, Pſa. 68. they are inquiring when this Lady came to Town, or when that goes out; nay perhaps the Theater is brought into the Temple, the laſt Play they ſaw is recollected, and Quotations enough brought thence to vie with the Preacher.

Preacher. 'Tis impossible to reckon up all their Topics of discourse, nay it were indeed scandalous for one that reproves them to pretend to know by how many impertinencies (to say no worse) they profane that holy Place and Time.

49. BUT that allseeing eye in whose presence they are, keeps an exact account, and will charge them not only with the principal but the product; not only with their own irreverences, but with those which by their example or incouragement they have occasion'd in others, nay farther even with that scandal which redounds to Christianity by it. For when one that is to choose a Religion, shall read the Precepts of *Pythagoras* enjoining that the Gods must not be worshipt in passing by, as it were accidentally, but with the greatest solemnity and intention, when they shall consider the care of *Numa* in instituting Officers, who at Sacrifices, and all divine Services, should call upon the people to keep silence and advert to Devotion, or but the practice of the present *Mahometans*, who permit none to sit in their *Moschos*, nor to pray without prostration: When I say this is considered, and compar'd with the scandalous indecency observable in our Churches, he will certainly exclude Christianity from all competition in his choice; not allow that the name of a Religion, whose very Worship appears so profane, and whose Votaries mock the God they pretend to serve.

50. YET

50. Yet how severe soever the charge may lie against som, I am far from including all under it. I know there are many Ladies whose examples are reproches to the other Sex, that help to fill our Congregations when Gentlemen desert them, & to whom somtimes we alone ow that our Churches are not furnished like the Feast in the Parable, *Lu.* 14. 21. meerly out of *the high waies and hedges, with the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind*; yet som even of these may be liable to some irregularity, which may be the effects of inadvertence or misperswasion, tho not of contemt or profaneness.

51. And first 'tis observable in som who come constantly, that yet they come not early, so that a considerable part of Praiers is past ere they enter the Church. This first causes som disturbance to others, the successive entry of new comers keeping the Congregation in a continual motion and agitation; which how unagreeable it is to Devotion, *Numa* a Heathen Prince may teach us, who *Plutarch* tells us took a particular care, that in the time of divine Worship, no knocking, clapping, or other noise should be heard; as well knowing how much the operations of the intellect are obstructed by any thing that importunes the Senses. What would he have said, should he come into one of our City Congregations, where often during the whole time of Praier, the clapping of Pew-doors does outnoise the Reader.

52. But besides the indecency of the thing, and

and the interruption it gives to others, 'tis very injurious to themselves; a kind of partial excommunication of their own inflicting, which excludes them from part of the divine Offices, and from that part too which is of the most universal Concern, I mean the confession of sins, which the wisdom of our Church has fitly placed in the beginning of her Service, as the necessary introduction to all the rest. For considering how obnoxious we are all to the wrath and vengeance of God, our first business is to deprecate that by an humble confession of our guilt. Would any Malefactor that had forfeited his life to Justice, come boldly to his Prince, and without taking notice of his crimes, importune him to bestow the greatest favors and dignities upon him? Yet 'tis the very same abrupt impudence in us, to supplicate the Divine Majesty before we attemt to atone him, to ask good things from him before we have acknowledged the ill we have don against him. And to such God may justly make such a return as *Augustus* did to one that had entertained him much below his Greatness, I knew not before that we were such familiars.

53. It will much better become them to anticipate the time, *to wait at the posts of his doors, Pro.* 8. and contrive to be there before the Service begins, that so by previous recollection they may put their minds in a fit posture of address at the public Audience: which (by the way) speaks it to be no very laudable custom which al-

most universally prevails, that those few who do come early, spend the interval before service in talking with one another, by which they do not only lose the advantage of that time for preparation, but convert it into the direct contrary, do thereby actually unfit and indispose themselves. God knows our hearts, even in their most composed temper, are too apt to create diversions; we need not start game for them to chase, and by prefacing our Praier with secular discourse, make a gap for the same thoughts to return upon us in them. Besides, in relation to the place, it has a spice of Profaneness, 'tis the bringing the Moabite and Ammonite into the Temple, *Deut.* 23. 3. a kind of invasion on God's Propriety, by introducing our worldly concerns or divertisments into the house which is called by his name, solemnly dedicated to him, and therefore dedicated that it might be his peculiar. So that with a little variation, we may to such apply the expostulatory reproof of the Apostle to the Corinthians, *1 Cor.* 11. 22. *what, have ye not houses to talk and converse in, or despise ye the Church of God?* But this is, I confess, a reproof that will not reach to many, there being so few of the better sort that come early enough to talk before Service, and as for those who talk at it, we have already ranked them under another *Classis*. Yet give me leave to add, that those fall not much short of that degree of profaneness, who come late only because they are loth to rise, or to abate any thing of the curiosi-

ty of their dress. For she that prefers her sloth or her vanity before God's Service, is like (how decently soever she behave herself) to give but an unsignificant attendance at it.

54. BUT I guess this may in many proceed from another cause, which tho less ill in their intention, is not so in respect either of its unreasonableness, or its effects, and that is an unequal estimate they make of the parts of God's Service. This last Age has brought in such a partiality for Preaching, that Prayer seems comparatively (like *Sarah* to *Hagar*) despicable in their eies: so that if they can but come time enough to the Sermon, they think they have discharged the weightier part of the Law, and of their own duty. This misperswasion, tho it have too generally diffused it self thro both Sexes, yet seems to have bin very especially imbibed by the Female. And besides the evidence that Sunday gives, the week-daies afford no less. Let there be a Lecture tho at the remotest part of the Town, what hurrying is there to it, but let the Bell tole never so loud for the Canonical hours of Common Prayer, 'twill not call the neerest of the Neighborhood. I speak not of those who are at defiance with our Service, and have listed themselves in separate Congregations (for I intend not to trace them thro their wild mazes) but of those who yet own our Church, and object not to its Offices, but only have suffered their valu for them to be insensibly undermined by their greater zeal for Preaching.

God sure intends an Harmony in all sacred Ordinances, and would not have set up a Party against another, but mutually assist each others operation upon us. Thus Praier disposes us to receive benefit by Preaching, and Preaching teaches us how to Pray aright; and God grant we may long enjoy the public opportunities of both. Yet since this Age has brought them to a competition, I must take leave to say, that if we come impartially to weigh Praier and Preaching, the Ballance will incline another way then it seems with many to do, and we shall find Praier the more essential part of Religion.

55. THE end of Preaching is twofold, either to teach us what we know not, or to excite us to practice what we already know: now in relation to the first of these ends, I suppose there is a wide difference between Preaching at the first promulgation of the Gospel, and now. 'Twas then the only way of reveling to the World the whole mystery of our Salvation, so that the Apostles inference was then irrefragable, *How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a Preacher?* Ro. 10.14. But where Christianity is planted, and the New Testament received, we have therein the whole Doctrin of Christ; nay we have not only the matter, but the very form of many of those Sermons which Christ and his Apostles Preached; so that unless we think them not sufficiently gifted, we cannot but acknowledg we have in them ample

instruction

instruction both for Faith and Manners; enough, as the Apostle speaks, to *make us wise unto Salvation*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. And the reading of those being a considerable part of our Churches Service, we have the most genuine Preaching even before the Minister ascends the Pulpit. Besides, for the help of those whose youth or incapacity disables them from making collections thence for themselves, our Church has epitomiz'd the most necessary Points of Belief and Practice in the Catechism, not (as the Roman) to preclude their farther search, but to supply them in the interim till they are qualified for it; and by that early infusion of Christian Principles, to secure them of that knowledg which is simply necessary to their Salvation.

6. NOW sure, to people in this state, Preaching is not of so absolute necessity in respect of instruction, as it was to those who from Heathenism and Idolatry were to be brought first to the Knowledg, and then to the Faith of Christ. We seem therefore now more generally concern'd in the other end of Preaching, the exciting us to Practice; for alas, there are few of us who stumble on sin for want of light, but either thro heedlesness, and want of looking before us, or else by a wilful prostration of our selves to it; so that we often need to be roused out of our negligence, to be frighted out of our stubbornness, and by a close application of those Truths we either forget, or suppress, be animated to our Duty. And

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for this purpose Preaching is doubtless of excellent use, and the nauseating of it shews a very sick constitution of mind; yet sure the over-greedy desire may be a Disease also. He that eats more then he can concoct, do's not so much assist as oppress nature, and those that run from Sermon to Sermon, that allow themselves no time to chew, much less to digest what they hear, will sooner confound their brains then better their lives. Nay, it oft betraies them to a very pernicious delusion, it diverts them from many of the practical parts of Piety, and yet gives them a confidence that they are extraordinarily Pious; and by their belief that Religion consists principally in hearing, makes them forget to try themselves by that more infallible test of doing God's will. So that whereas God never design'd Preaching for more then a guide in their way, they make it their way, and their end too; and Hearing must, like a circle, begin and terminate in it self.

57. I am sure in secular concerns, we should think him a very unprofitable servant, that after his Lord had given him directions what to do, should be so transported with hearing his instructions, that he should desire to have it infinitly repeated, and so spend the time wherein he should do the work. And we have reason to think God will make the same judgment of those who do the like in his service.

58. One would now think that this ravenous appetite of hearing should supersede all niceness

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in it, yet we find it do's not, but that ſom make a ſhift to be at once voracious and ſqueamiſh. If this ſpiritual food be not artificially dreſt, 'tis too groſs for their palats; the Phraſe muſt be elegant, the words well accented, and the *inticing words of mans wiſdom* which St. *Paul* diſclaims in his Preaching, 1 *Cor.* 2. 4. is that which they principally regard. Nay the memory of the Preacher becomes the moſt material Point of his Sermon, and the firſt glance on his Book prejudges him. I need not add the extravagances of an uncouth tone, a furious vehemence, or phantaſtic geſture, wherein the ſoul and vital efficacy of Preaching has bin ſolemnly placed. Now 'tis evident all theſe are but trivial Accompliſhments; ſo that thoſe who inſiſt ſo much on them, do make Preaching much leſs Sacred and Divine then indeed it is; and therefore cannot without abſurdity lay the main ſtreſs of Religion upon it, or make that the higheſt of God's Ordinances, which owes all its gratefulneſs with them to the Endowments of men. Som may think I purſu this ſubject too far; but I am ſure I do it not with deſign to derogate from the juſt reſpect due to Preaching; only I would not have it monopolize our eſteem, or juſtle out another Duty, which is of more conſtant uſe, and indiſpenſible neceſſity.

59. And ſuch certainly is Praier, that reſpiration of the ſoul, which is ſo neceſſary, that it admits not of long intermiſſion, and therefore ſeems to carry the ſame proportion to hearing, which

breath-

breathing does to eating: we may make long intervals of feeding, and yet subsist; but if we should do so in breathing, we cannot recover it. Praier is like the morning and evening Sacrifice under the Law, which God ordained should be perpetual; whereas Preaching is but like the Readings in the Synagogues on Sabbaths and Festivals. Indeed, however we have confounded the terms, 'tis Praier only that can properly be called the worship of God; 'tis that by which we pay him his solemn homage, acknowledg his soveraignty, and our own dependance. When we hear, we do no more then what every Disciple does to his Master; but when we pray, we own him as the spring and source of all the good we expect, as the Author of our Being, and the Object of our Adoration: in a word, we do by it profess him our God; it being an impress of meer natural Religion to supplicate the Deity we acknowledg.

60. And as by Praier we render the greatest Honor to God, so likewise do we procure the greatest advantages to our selves. Praier is the powerful Engin, by which we draw down Blessings; 'tis the key which lets us into the immense Store-house of the Almighty; nay 'tis that upon which the Efficacy of Preaching depends. The Word is but a dead letter without the Spirit; and God has promised the Spirit to none but those that ask it, *Luk.* 11. 13. So that Praier is that which enlivens and inspirits our most sacred actions:

ons: and accordingly in Scripture we find it still a concomitant in all Ecclesiastical Concerns. When an Apostle was to be substituted in the room of *Judas*, we find they referred it not to the decision of lots, till God, who had the sole disposing of them, *Prov.* 16. 33. had bin invoked by solemn Praier, *Act.* 1. 24. So when *Barnabas* and *Saul* were to be separated to the Ministry, tho the appointment were by the Holy Ghost, yet that superseded not the necessity of Praier; the Apostles praied, (yea, and fasted too) before they laid their hand on them, *Act.* 13. 3. Nay, our Blessed Savior Himself, tho He knew *what was in man*, and needed no guidance but his own Omniscience in his choice: yet we find that before his Election of the twelve Apostles, he continued a whole night in Praier to God, *Luk.* 6. 12. doubtless to teach us how requisit Praier is in all our important interests, which like the Pillar of Cloud and Fire to the Israelites, is our best Convoy thro the Wilderness, thro all the snares and temptations, thro all the calamities and distresses of this World, and our most infallible Guide to the Land of Promise.

61. And sure when all these are the properties of Praier, tho privat, they will not less belong to the public; such a conspiration and union of importunate Devotion must have a proportionable increase in its effect; and if Heaven can suffer violence by the fervor of one single Votary,

with what ſtorms, what batteries will it be force
by a numerous Congregation? We find th
Church is, by Chriſt, compared to *an Army wit*
banners, *Cant.* 6. 3. but ſure never is this Army i
ſo good array, in ſo invincible a poſture as upo
its knees. The Eccleſiaſtical ſtory tells us of
Legion of Chriſtians in *Aurelius*'s Camp, who i
that poſture diſcomfited two aſſailants at once
the enemy and the drought. That breath whic
they ſent up in Praiers, like a kindly exhalatio
return'd in rain, and relieved the periſhing Ar
my: and had we but the ſame fervor, and the ſam
innocency, could we lift up but as pure hand
as they did, there would be no Bleſſing beyon
our reach. But the leſs any of us find our ſelve
ſo qualified, the more need we have to put ou
ſelves among thoſe that are.

62. THERE is an happy contagion in good-
neſs; like green wood we may perhaps be kind
led by the neighboring flame: the example o
anothers zeal may awake mine. However, then
is ſom advantage in being in the company: thoſ
ſhowers of benediction which their Praiers brin
down, are ſo plentiful, that ſom drops at leaſt ma
ſcatter upon thoſe about them. We find *Eliſh*
for *Jehoſhaphat*'s ſake, endured the preſence o
Jehoram, whom otherwiſe he profeſſes he woul
not have lookt towards, 2 *King.* 3. 14. and Go
may perhaps do the like in this caſe; and as h
proſpered *Potiphar* for *Joſeph*'s ſake, *Gen.* 39. 2
ſa

ſo the Piety of ſome few may redound to the benefit of all. From all theſe conſiderations I ſuppoſe may ſufficiently be evinced the neceſſity and benefit of public Praier, and conſequently the unreaſonableneſs of thoſe, who upon any pretence neglect it. I ſhall now only beſeech thoſe to whom I ſpeak to make the application to themſelves, and to ſhew they do ſo by their more early and more aſſiduous attendance on it.

63. THERE is alſo another Duty to which many of theſe to whom I write ſeem to need ſom incitation, and that is Communicating, a part of Devotion which the looſer ſort ſcarce ever think in ſeaſon till their death beds; as if that Sacrament like the Romaniſts Extreme Unction, were only fit for expiring ſouls: but to ſuch we may apply the words of the Angel to the woman, Luk. 24.5. *Why ſeek ye the living among the dead?* Why think ye that the Sun of Righteouſneſs is only to ſhine in the ſhades of death, or that Chriſt is never to give us his fleſh, till we are putting off our own? 'Tis one principal end of that Sacrament to engage and enable us to a new life; how prepoſterous then is it, how utterly inconſiſtent with that end to defer it to the hour of death. 'Tis true 'tis a good *Viaticum* for ſuch as are in their way towards bliſs, but it is too bold a hope to fancy that it ſhall in an inſtant bring them into that way, who have their whole life poſted on in the contrary. The roads to Heaven and Hell lie

ſure too far aſunder to be within diſtance of one ſtep; nor can it with any ſafety be preſumed that once receiving at their death, ſhall expiate ſo many wilful neglects of it in their life.

64. BUT I ſhall ſuppoſe theſe total Omiſſions are not a common guilt: yet with many others the fault differs only in degree, they do not wholly omit, but yet come ſo infrequently as if they thought it a very arbitrary matter whether they come or no. And this truly is obſervable in many who ſeem to give good attendance on other parts of divine Worſhip: for indeed 'tis a ſad ſpectacle to ſee, that let a Church be never ſo much crouded at Sermon, 'tis emtied in an inſtant when the Communion begins: people run as it were frighted from it, as if they thought with thoſe in *Malachy*, that *the table of our Lord is polluted*, Mal. 1. 12. that ſome peſt or infection would thence break forth upon them. A ſtrange indignity to the Majeſty, and ingratitude to the love of our Redeemer. Let a King, or but ſom great man make a public entertainment, how hard is it to keep back the preſſing multitude: many Officers are neceſſary to repel the uninvited gueſts: and yet here there needs more to drive us to it, tho the invitation be more general, and the Treat infinitly more magnificent.

65. I know this fault (like many other) ſhrouds it ſelf under a fair diſguiſe, and this barbarous neglect pretends to the humbleſt veneration.

tion. People say 'tis their great reverence they have for the Sacrament that keeps them at so great a distance; but sure that is but a fictitious reverence which discards Obedience; and when Christ commands our coming, our drawing back looks more like stubbornesse and rebellion, then awe and respect. I suppose we pretend not to exceed the Primitive Christians in humility and godly fear; and yet they communicated daily, and therefore sure our reverence is of a much differing make from theirs, if it produce such contrary effects. Indeed 'tis to be feared that many put a great cheat upon themselves in this matter. The Eucharist is justly accounted the highest of divine Ordinances, and those who think of no preparation in other, yet have som general impressions of the necessity of it in this; but the uneasinesse of the task discourages them, they dare not come without a wedding garment, and yet are loth to be at the pains to put it on: so that all this goodly pretext of reverence, is but the Devil in *Samuels* Mantle, is but sloth clad in the habit of humility.

66. AND to this temtation of sloth, there is another thing very subservient, and that is the easie and slight opinion which is commonly taken of sins of Omission. Many are startled at great Commissions, think them to carry a face of deformity and horror, who in the mean time look on Omissions only as privations and meer nothings, as

if

if all the affirmative Precepts were only things of form, put in by God rather to try our inclinations, then to oblige our performance; and so were rather overtures and proposals which we may assent to or not, then injunctions which at our peril we must obey. A fancy no less absurd then impious. That God should be content so to compound with his creatures (and like a Prince overpower'd by his vassals) consent to remit all their homage, absolve them from all positive Duty, so they would be but so civil as not to flie in his face, or to commit outrage on his Person. But this wild imagination needs no other confutation, then that form of Inditement our Savior gives us as the Model of that which shall be used at the last day, *Mat.* 25. where the whole Process lies against sins of Omission, and yet the sentence is as dismal and irreversible, as if all the Commissions in the World had bin put into the Bill.

67. And certainly of all Omissions none is like to be more severely charged then this of communicating, which is not only a disobedience, but an unkindness, which strikes not only at the Autority but the Love of our Lord, when he so affects a union with us that he creats Mysteries only to effect it, when he descends even to our sensuality, and because we want spiritual appetites, puts himself within reach of our natural, and as he once veil'd his Divinity in flesh, so now veils even that flesh under the form of our corporal

poral nutriſhment, only that he may the more indiſſolvably unite, yea incorporate himſelf with us: When I ſay he do's all this, we are not only impious but inhuman if it will not attract us. Nay farther, when he do's all this upon the moſt endearing memory of what he has before don for us, when he preſents himſelf to our embraces in the ſame form wherein he preſented himſelf to God for our expiation, when he ſhews us thoſe wounds which our iniquities made, thoſe ſtripes by which we were healed, that death by which we are revived, ſhall we to compleat the Scene of his Paſſion, force him alſo to that pathetic complaint, *Lam.* 1. 12. *Have ye no regard all ye that paſs by?* Shall we inſtead of ſmiting our breaſts (as did other witneſſes of his ſufferings) turn our backs? If we can habitually do this, 'tis to be feared the next degree will be to wag our heads too, and we ſhall have the profaneneſs to deride, what we have not the Piety to commemprate.

68. And this ſeems to be no improbable fear: for in Religion there are gradual declinations as well as advances: coldneſs and tepidity will (if not ſtopt in its progreſs) quickly grow to lothing and contempt. And indeed to what can we more reaſonably impute the great overflowings of profaneneſs among us, then to our ill-husbanding the means of Grace? Now certainly of all thoſe means there is none of greater energy and power then the bleſſed Sacrament.

69. Were

69. WERE there no other benefit derived from it save that which the preparation implies, 'twere very considerable. It brings us to a recollection, fixes our indefinit purposes of searching and trying our waies, which else perhaps we should infinitely defer, stops our carrier in sin, and by acquainting us with our selves, shews us where our danger lies, and how we are to avert it, what breaches are made in upon our souls, and how we must repair them; all which are with many seldom thought of, but when the time of communicating approaches. We live so far off from our selves, know so little what is don in us, that we answer the description the Prophet makes of the surprize of *Babylon*, of which the King knew nothing till post after post run to inform him that his *City was taken at one end*, Jer. 51. 14. we often lie secure while the enemy is within our walls, and therefore they are friendly alarms which the Sacrament gives us to look to our defence. But if when the Trumpet sounds none will prepare himself to the Battel, if when the Minister gives warning of a Sacrament, and the preparation it requires, we go our waies, and with *Gallio* care for none of those things, or with *Felix*, Acts 24. 26. put it off to a convenient time, we wilfully expose our selves, and 'tis but just Christs dreadful menace should be executed upon us, that we *die in our sins*, who will frustrate such an opportunity of a rescu from them.

70. BUT

70. But 'tis not only this remoter and accidental advantage (this preventing Grace) which the Holy Eucharist affords; it contains yet greater and more intrinsic benefits; is a Spring of assisting Grace also: 'tis a Magazine of Spiritual Artillery to fortifie us against all assaults of the Devil, the great Catholicon for all the Maladies of our Souls, that which, if duly received, will qualifie us to make St. *Pauls* boast, *Phil.* 4. 13. *I can do all things thro Christ which strengthens me.* In a word, 'tis to us whatever we need, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption, because it possesses us of him who is so, 1 *Cor.* 1. 31. So that whenever we neglect it, we manifestly betray our own interest, and do implicitly chose death whilst we thus run from life.

71. Thus we see there is a concurrence of all sorts of Arguments for this Duty; oh that som (at least) of them may prevail! If we are not tractable enough to do it in Obedience, yet let us be so ingenious as to do it for Love, for Gratitude; or if for neither of those, let us be at least so wise as to do it for Interest, and Advantage. I know people are apt to pretend business; the Farm and the Oxen must excuse their coming to the Feast: but alas what business can there be of equal necessity or advantage with this? Yet even that Apology is superseded to those I now speak to, who as I observed before have leisure more then enough; so that it would be one part of the

benefit, its taking up ſom of their time: I
me therefore earneſtly beſeech them, not
grudg a few of their vacant hours to this ſo happ
an emploiment.

72. DID any of their near Friends and Rel
tions invite them to an interview, they would n
think him too importune, tho he repeated th
ſummons weekly, nay daily, but would punctua
ly obſerve the meeting: and when their Savio
much ſeldomer entreats their company, ſhall h
not obtain it? muſt he never ſee them but at tw
or three ſolemn times of the year? and ſhall the
wonder at any intervening invitation (as the Shu
namites husband did at her going to the Prophe
when it was *neither new Moon or Sabbath*, 2 King
4. 23.) and tell him 'tis not yet *Eaſter* or *Chriſt
mas*: this were not only to be irreligious but rude
and methinks thoſe who ſtand ſo much upon th
punctilios of Civility to one another, ſhoul
not then only lay aſide their good manners whe
they are to treat with their Redeemer. Certain
ly he is not ſo unpleſant company that they nee
ſhun his converſe: if he do appear ſo to any, 'ti
that ſhunning that is the cauſe of it. He do's no
open his treſures to ſtrangers: they that com
now and then for form ſake, no wonder if thei
entertainment be as cold as their addreſs. The
that would indeed *taſt how ſweet the Lord is*
Pſa. 34. 8. muſt by the frequency of their com
ing ſhew the heartineſs of it; and then they woul
indeed

indeed find it a *feast of fat things*, as the Prophet speaks.

73. In a word, let them but make experiment, resolve for a certain time (be it a year or thereabouts) to omit no opportunity, (and withall no due preparation) of communicating, I am a little confident they will afterwards need no other importunity but that of their own longings: the expiration of that definit time will prove the beginning of an indefinit, and their resolutions will have no other limit but their lives. For certainly there is not in all the whole mystery of Godliness, in all the Economy of the Gospel, so expedite, so infallible a means of growth in Grace, as a frequent and worthy participation of this blessed Sacrament. I cannot therefore more pertinently close this Section, then with this exhortation to it, by which they will not only compleat all their Devotions, crown and hallow the rest of their Oblations to God, but they will be advanced also in all parts of practical Piety. For tho this and other sacred Offices be perform'd in the Church, the efficacy of them is not circumscribed within those walls, but follows the devout soul thro all the occurrences of human life.

74. SHE that has intently consider'd the presence of God in the Sanctuary, has learn'd so much of his Ubiquity, that she will not easily forget it in other places, and she that remembers that, will need no other guard to secure her innocence,

no other incentive to animate her endeavors, since she is view'd by him who is equally powerful to punish or reward, who regards not the person of the mighty, nor can be awed into the connivance of a crime. Indeed a serious advertence to the divine Presence, is the most certain curb to all disorderly appetites, as on the contrary the *not having God before their eies*, is in Scripture the comprehensive description of the most wretchless profligated state of sin. It concerns therefore all those who aspire to true Piety, to nurish that awful sense in their hearts, as that which will best enable them to practice the Apostles advice, *2 Cor. 7. 1. To cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God.*

75. I AM sensible that this Section is spun out to a length very unproportionable to the former: but as the principal wheel in an artificial movement may be allowed a bulk somewhat answerable to its use, so upon the same account, the size of this is not unjustifiable, the Piety which this designs to recommend being the one necessary thing, which must influence all other endowments. We know the coarse resemblance *Solomon* makes of a *fair woman without discretion, that she is like a jewel of gold in a swines snout*; Prov. 11, 22. but even that discretion (if any such could be) without Piety were but the adding one jewel more, exposing another valuable thing to the same despicable

cable ridiculous use. But to speak truly there is no real Discretion, where there is no Religion. And therefore *Solomon* seems in this place to understand by it that practical Wisdom, which in the sacred Dialect (his writings especially) is equivalent to the fear of the Lord. 'Tis true, there may be a rallying wit to scoff and abuse, a serpentine Wiliness to undermine and deceive; but that sort of Wisdom (like that of *Achitophel*) finally converts into Foolishness, do's very often appear to do so in this life, but must certainly in the next, because it builds upon a false bottom, prefers temporal things before eternal. And as neither Beauty nor Wit (the two celebrated accomplishments of women) so will neither Greatness and Honor give any advantage without Piety: 'twill only (as hath bin already observed) make them more exemplary sinners, inflame the account, and so expose them to a greater degree of condemnation. For sure 'tis not their Sex that will rescu them from the dismal denunciation of the Wise man, *Wisd. 6. 6. Mighty men shall be mightily tormented.* I conclude all with another irrefragable Maxim of the same Author, *Whether one be Rich, Noble, or Poor, their Glory is the Fear of the Lord.*

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PART II. SECT. I.

Of Virgins.

WE have taken a view of those general Qualifications, which are at once the Duty and the Ornament of the Female Sex consider'd at large: These, like the common Genus, involve all. But there are also specific differences arising from the several circumstances and states of Life, som whereof may exact greater degrees even of the former Vertues; and all may have som distinct and peculiar Requisits adapted to that particular state and condition: and of these our proposed method engages us now to consider. Human life is full of vicissitudes and

changes, so that 'tis impossible to enumerate all the lesser accidental alteration to which it is liable. But the principal and most distinct Scenes, in which a Woman can be suppos'd regularly to be an Actor, are these three, *Virginity*, *Marriage*, and *Widowhood*; which as they differ widely from each other, so for the discharging their respective Duties, there are peculiar cautions worthy to be adverted to.

2. Virginity is first, in order of time, and we will take St *Paul*'s judgment, in respect of excellence also, 1 *Cor.* 7. And indeed, she that preserves her self in that state upon the account he mentions v. 33. that *she may care for the things that are of the Lord, that she may be holy both in Body and in Spirit*, deserves a great deal of Veneration, as making one of the neareſt approaches to the Angelical State. And accordingly, in the Primitive Times, such a Virginity was had in a singular Estimation, and by the assignment of the School-men hath a particular Coronet of Glory belonging to it. Nay even among the Heathens, a consecrated Virgin was look'd on as a thing most sacred. The Roman Vestals had extraordinary priviledges allowed them by the State, and they were generally held in such Reverence, that Testaments and other Depositums of the greatest Trust were usually committed to their Custody, as to the surest and most inviolable Sanctuary. Nay their presence was so to convicted Malefactors, that Magistrates veiling their *fasces* when they appear'd, and giving up the Criminal to the commanding Intercession of Virgin Innocence.

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3. As for the Religious Orders of Virgins in the present Roman Church, tho some, and those very great abuses have crept in; yet I think 'twere to be wish'd, that those who suppress them in this Nation, had confin'd themselves within the bounds of a Reformation, by choosing rather to rectifie and regulate, then abolish them.

4. But tho there be not among us such Societies, yet there may be *Nuns* who are not Profest. She who has devoted her heart to God, and the better to secure his Interest against the most insinuating rival of Human Love, intends to admit none, and praies that she may not; do's by those humble purposes consecrate her self to God: and perhaps more acceptably, then if her presumtion should make her more positive, and engage her in a Vow she is not sure to perform.

5. But this is a case do's not much need stating in our Clime, wherein Women are so little transported with this zeal of voluntary Virginity, that there are but few can find patience for it when necessary. An old Maid is now thought such a Curse as no Poetic fury can exceed, look'd on as the most calamitous Creature in nature. And I so far yield to the opinion, as to confess it so to those who are kept in that state against their wills; but sure the original of that misery is from the desire, not the restraint of Marriage: let them but suppress that once, and the other will never be their Infelicity. But I must not be so unkind to the Sex, as to think 'tis alwaies such desire that gives them aversion to Celibacy;

I doubt not many are frighted only with the vulgar contemt under which that state lies: for which if there be no cure, yet there is the same armor against this, which is against all other causeless Reproaches, *viz.* to contemn it. Yet I am a little apt to believe there may be a prevention in the case. If the superannuated Virgins would behave themselves with Gravity and Retervedness, addict themselves to the strictest Virtu and Piety, they would give the World som cause to believe, 'twas not their necessity, but their choice which kept them unmarried; that they were pre-engag'd to a better Amour, espoused to the Spiritual Bridegroom; and this would give them among the soberer sort, at least the reverence and esteem of Matrons. Or if after all caution and endeavor, they chance to fall under the Tongues of malicious slanderers, this is no more then happens in all other Instances of Duty; and if contemt be to be avoided, Christianity it self must be quitted as well as Virgin Chastity. But if on the other side they endeavor to disguise their Age by all the impostures and galeties of a youthful dress and behavior, if they still herd themselves among the youngest and vainest company, betray a young Mind in an aged Body; this must certainly expose them to scorn and censure. If no Play, no Ball or Dancing-meeting can escape them, people will undoubtedly conclude that they desire to put off themselves, to meet with Chap-men, who so constantly keep the Fairs. I wish therefore they would more universally try the former expedient

which

which I am confident is the best Amulet against the reproch they so much dread, and may also deliver them from the danger of a more costly remedy, I mean that of an unequal and imprudent Match, which many have rush'd upon as they have ran frighted from the other, and so by an unhappy contradiction, do both stay long and marry hastily, gall their neck to spare their ears, and run into the Yoke rather then hear so slight and unreasonable a Reproch. They need not, I think, be upbraided with the folly of such an Election, since their own Experience is (to many of them) but too severe a Monitor. I shall not insist further on this, but having given the elder Virgins that Ensign of their Seniority as to stand first in my Discourse, I shall now address more generally to the rest.

6. And here the two grand Elements essential to the Virgin state, are Modesty and Obedience, which tho necessary to all, yet are in a more eminent degree requir'd here. And therefore, tho I have spoken largely of the vertu of Modesty in the first part of this Tract, yet it will not be impertinent to make som further reflections on it, by way of application to Virgins, in whom Modesty should appear in its highest elevation, & should come up to Shamefacedness. Her look, her speech, her whole behavior should own an humble distrust of her self; she is to look on her self but as a Novice, a Probationer in the World, and must take this time rather to learn and observe, then to dictate and prescribe. Indeed there is scarce any thing

looks

looks more indecent, then to see a young Maid too forward and confident in her talk. 'Tis the Opinion of the Wise-man, Eccl. 32. 8. that *a young man should scarce speak, tho twice ask'd*: in proportion to which, 'twill sure not become a young Woman, whose Sex puts her under greater restraints, to be either importunate or magisterial in her discourse. And tho that which former Ages called Boldness, is now only Assurance and good Breeding, yet we have seen such bad superstructures upon that Foundation, as sure will not much recommend it to any considering Person.

7. But there is another breach of Modesty, as it relates to Chastity, in which they are yet more especially concern'd. The very name of Virgin imports a most critical niceness in that point. Every indecent curiosity, or impure fancy, is a deflowring of the mind, & every the least corruption of them gives som degrees of defilement to the Body too. For between the state of pure immaculate Virginity and arrant Prostitution, there are many intermedial steps; and she that makes any of them, is so far departed from her first Integrity. She that listens to any wanton Discourse has violated her ears, she that speaks any her tongue, every immodest glance vitiates her eye, and every the lightest act of dalliance leaves somthing of stain & sullage behind it. There is therefore a most rigorous caution requisit herein: for as nothing is more clean and white then a perfect Virginity, so every the least spot or soil is the more discernable. Besides

sides, Youth is for the most part flexible, and easily warps into a crookedness, and therefore can never set it self too far from a temtation. Our tender blossoms we are fain to skreen and shelter, because every unkindly air nips and destroies them: and nothing can be more nice and delicate then a Maiden Vertu, which ought not to be expos'd to any of those malignant airs which may blast and corrupt it, of which God knows there are too many, som that blow from within, and others from without.

8. Of the first sort, there is none more mischievous then Curiosity, a temtation which foil'd human Nature even in Paradise: and therefore sure a feeble Girl ought not to trust her self with that which subdued her better fortified Parent. The truth is, an affected Ignorance cannot be so blamable in other cases as it is commendable in this. Indeed it is the surest and most invincible Guard; for she who is curious to know Indecent Things, 'tis odds but she will too soon and too dearly buy the learning. The depressing and detesting all such Curiosities, is therefore that eminent fundamental piece of Continence I would recommend to them, as that which will protect and secure all the rest.

9. But when they have set this guard upon themselves, they must provide against Foreign assaults too; the most dangerous whereof I take to be ill Company, and Idleness. Against the first they must provide by a prudent choice of Conversation, which should generally be of their own Sex; yet

not

not all of that neither, but such who will at least entertain them innocently if not profitably. Against the second they may secure themselves by a constant series of Emploiments: I mean not such frivolous ones as are more idle then doing nothing, but such as are ingenuous, and som way worth their time: wherein as the first place is to be given to the offices of Piety, so in the Intervals of those, there are divers others, by which they may not unusefully fill up the vacancies of their time: such are the acquiring of any of those ornamental improvements which become their Quality, as Writing, Needle-works, Languages, Music, or the like. If I should here insert the art of Economy and Houshold Managery, I should not think I affronted them in it; that being the most proper Feminine business, from which neither wealth nor greatness can totally absolve them: and a little of the Theory in their Parents house, would much assist them towards the Practic when they come to their own. In a word, there are many parts of knowledg useful for Civil as well as Divine Life; and the improving themselves in any of those, is a rational Emploiment.

10. But I confess I know not how to reduce to that Head many of those things which from divertisements, are now stept up to be the solemn business of many young Ladies, (and I doubt of some old.) Such is in the first place Gaming, a recreation whose lawfulness I question not, whilst it keeps within the bounds of a recreation: but when it

it sets up for a Calling, I know not whence it derives its license. And a Calling sure it seems to be with som; a laborious one too, such as they toil night and day at, may do not allow themselves that remission which the Laws both of God and Man have provided for the meanest Mechanic: the Sabbath is to them no day of rest, but this Trade go's on when all Shops are shut. I know not how they satisfie themselves in such an habitual waste of their time, (besides all the incidental faults of Avarice and anger,) but I much doubt that Plea, whatsoever it is which passes with them, will scarce hold weight at his Tribunal, who has commanded us to *redeem*, not fling away *our time*.

Reading Romances, is another thing to which som devote a very considerable part of their time, & that is the reading Romances, which seems now to be thought the peculiar and only becoming study of young Ladies. I confess their Youth may a little adapt it to them when they were Children, and I wish they were always in their event as harmless; but I fear they often leave ill impressions behind them. Those amorous Passions, which 'tis their design to paint to the utmost Life, are apt to insinuate themselves into their unwary Readers, and by an unhappy inversion a Copy shall produce an Original. When a poor young Creature shall read there of som triumphant Beauty, that has I know not how many captiv'd Knights prostrate at her feet, she will probably be temted to think it a fine thing; and may reflect how much she loses time,

that has not yet subdu'd one heart: and then her business will be to spread her nets, lay her toils to catch sombody who will more fatally ensnare her. And when she has once wound her self into an Amour, those Authors are subtil Casuists for all difficult cases that may occur in it, will instruct her the necessary Artifices of deluding Parents and Friends, and put her ruin perfectly in her own power. And truly this seems to be so natural a consequent of this sort of study, that of all the divertisements that look so innocently, they can scarce fall upon any more hazardous. Indeed, 'tis very difficult to imagine what vast mischief is don to the World, by the false notions and images of things particularly of Love and Honor, those noblest concerns of human Life, represented in these Mirrors. But when we consider upon what principles the Duellists and Hectors of the Age defend their Outrages, and how great a Devotion is paid to Lust, instead of virtuous Love, we cannot be to seek for the Gospel which makes these Doctrines appear Orthodox.

12. As for the entertainments which they find abroad, they may be innocent, or otherwise, according as they are managed. The common entercourse of Civility is a debt to Humanity, & therefore mutual Visits may often be necessary, and so (in som degree) may be several harmless and healthful recreations which may call them abroad, for I write not now to Nuns, and have no purpose to confine them to a Cloister. Yet on the other

ble to be always wandring, is the condition of a Vagabond; and of the two, 'tis better to be a Prisoner to ones home, then a Stranger. *Solomon* links with som very unlaudable qualities of a Woman, *Prov.* 7. 11. that *her feet abide not in her house*; and 'tis an unhappy impotence not to be able to stay at home, when there is any thing to be seen abroad: that any Mask, or Revel, any Jollity of others must be their rack and torment, if they can not get to it. Alas such Meetings are not so sure to be safe, that they had need be frequent, and they are of all others least like to be safe to those, who much dote on them. And therefore those that find they do so, had need to counterbiass their minds, and set them to somthing better, and by more serious entertainments supplant those vanities, which at the best are childish, and may often prove worse; it being too probable that those *Dinah*'s which are still gadding, tho on pretence to see only the daughters of the Land, *Gen.* 34. may at last meet with a son of *Hamor*.

13. THERE is also another great devourer of time subservient to the former, I mean Dressings for they that love to be seen much abroad, will be sure to be seen in the most exact Form. And this is an employment that do's not steal but challenge their time; what they wast here is *cum Privilegio*, it being by the verdict of this age the proper business, the one science wherein a young Lady is to be perfectly verst: so that now all vertuous emulation is converted into this single Ambition, who shall

excel in this Faculty. A vanity which I confess is more excusable in the youngest then the elder sort; they being supposable not yet to have outworn the reliques of their Childhood, to which toies and gaiety were proportionable. Besides, 'tis fore allowable upon a soberer account, that they who design Marriage should give themselves the advantage of decent Ornaments, and not by the negligent rudeness of their Dress belie Nature, and render themselves less amiable then she has made them. But all this being granted, 'twill by no means justifie that excessive curiosity and solicitude, that expence of time and mony too which is now used. A very moderate degree of all those will serve for that ordinary decency which they need provide for, will keep them from the reproach of an affected singularity, which is as much as a sober Person need take care for. And I must take leave to say, that in order to Marriage, such a moderation is much likelier to succeed then the contrary extravagance. Among the prudenter sort of Men I am sure it is, if it be not among the loose and vain, against which 'twill be their guard, and so do them the greater service. For certainly, he that chooses a Wife for those qualities for which a wise man would refuse her, understands so little what Marriage is, as portends no great felicity to her that shall have him. But if they desire to marry Men of sobriety and discretion, they are obliged in justice to bring the same qualities they expect, which will be very ill evidenced by that excess & vanity we now speak of.

14. For

14. For to speak a plain (tho perhaps ungrateful) truth, this (together with som of the modish liberties now in use) is it, which keeps so many young Ladies about the Town unmarried, 'till they lose the Epithet of young. Sober Men are afraid to venture upon a humor so disagreeing to their own, lest whilst (according to the primitive reason of Marriage) they seek a help, they espouse a ruin. But this is especially dreadful to a plain Country Gentleman, who looks upon one of these fine Women as a Gaudy Idol, to whom if he once become a Votary, he must sacrifice a great part of his Fortune, and all his Content. How reasonable that apprehension is, the many wracks of considerable Families do too evidently attest. But I presume som of the nicer Ladies have such a contemt of any thing that they please to call Rustic, that they will not much regret the averting of those whom they so despise. They will not, perhaps, while they are in pursuit or hopes of others; but when those fail, these will be look'd on as a welcom Reserve: and therefore 'twill be no Prudence to cut themselves off from that last resort, lest they (as many have don) betake themselves to much worse. For as in many instances 'tis the Country which feeds and maintains the grandeur of the Town, so of all commerces there, Marriage would soonest fail, if all Rural supplies were cut off.

15. But I have pursued this speculation farther then perhaps my Virgin Readers will thank me for: I shall return to that which it was brought to in-

force,

force, and beseech them, that if not to Men, yet to approve themselves to God, they will confine themselves in the matter of their Dress within the due limits of Decency and Sobriety. I shall not direct them to those strict Rules which *Tertullian* and som other of the ancient Fathers have prescrib'd in this matter; my Petition is only, That our Virgins would at least so take care of their Bodies, as Persons that also have a Soul: which if they can be perswaded to, they may reserve much of their time for more worthy uses then those of the Comb, the Tuillets, and the Glass. And truly, 'tis not a little their concern to do so, for this Spring of their age is that Critical Instant that must either confirm or blast the hopes of all the succeeding Seasons. The minds of young People are usually compared to a blank sheet of Paper, equally capable of the best or the worst Impressions: 'tis pitty they should be fill'd with childish Scrawls, and little insignificant Figures, but 'tis shame and horror they should be stain'd with any vicious Characters, any blots of Impurity or Dishonor. To prevent which, let the severest notions of Modesty and Honor be early and deeply impress upon their Souls, graven as with the point of a Diamond, that they may be as indelible as they are indispensibly necessary to the Virgin state.

16. There is also another very requisite Quality, and that is Obedience. The younger sort of Virgins are supposed to have Parents, or if any has bin so unhappy as to loose them early, they commonly are

are left in the charge of som Friend or Guardian, that is to supply the place: so that they cannot be to seek to whom this Obedience is to be paid. And it is not more their Duty then their Interest to pay it. Youth is apt to be foolish in its Designs, and heady in the pursuit of them; and there can be nothing more deplorable then to have it left to its self. And therefore God, who permits not even the Brutes to destitute their young ones till they attain to the perfection of their Kind, has put Children under the guidance and protection of their Parents, 'till by the maturing of their Judgments they are qualified to be their own Conductors. Now this Obedience (as that which is due to all other Superiors) is to extend it self to all things that are either good or indifferent, and has no clause of exception, but only where the Command is unlawful. And in so wide a scene of Action, there will occur so many particular occasions of submission, that they had need have a great reverence of their Parents judgments, and distrust of their own. And if it should happen that som Parents are not qualified to give them the former, yet the general imbecillity of their age, will remain a constant ground of the latter: so that they may safelier venture themselves to their Parents misguidance then their own, by how much the errors of Humility and Obedience, are less malignant then those of Presumption and Arrogance.

17. But this is a Doctrin which will scarce pass for Orthodox with many of the young Women of our

our daies, with whom 'tis prejudice enough against the prudentest advice, that it comes from their Parents. 'Tis the grand Ingenuity of these Times to turn every thing into Ridicule; and if a Girl can but rally smartly upon the sober admonition of a Parent, she concludes she is the ablest Person, takes her self for a Wit, and the other for a Fop; (a Bugbear word, devised to fright all seriousness and sobriety out of the World) and learns not only to disobey, but to contemn. Indeed the great confidence that Youth now seems to have of it self, as it is very indecent, so it is extremely pernicious. Children that will attempt to go alone before their time, oft get dangerous falls: and when those who are but little removed from Children, shall cast off the wiser conduct of others, they oft sadly miscarry by their own.

18. I Know this Age has so great a contempt of the former, that 'tis but matter of scorn to alledg any of their Customs, else I should say that the liberties that are taken now, would then have been startled at. They that should then have seen a yong Maid rambling abroad without her Mother, or som other prudent Person, would have look'd on her as a stray, and thought it but a neighbourly office to have brought her home: whereas now 'tis a rarity to see them in any company graver then themselves, and she that go's with her Parent (unless it be such a Parent as is as wild as her self) thinks she do's but walk abroad with her Jailor. But sure there are no small mischiefs that attend

this

this liberty; for it leaves them perfectly to the choise of their company, a thing of too weighty an importance for giddy heads to determin: who will be sure to elect such as are of their own humor, with whom they may keep up a traffick of little Impertinencies and trifling Entertainments; and so by consequence, condemn themselves never to grow wiser, which they might do by an Ingenious Conversation. Nay 'tis well if that negative ill be the worst, for it gives opportunity to any that have ill designs upon them. It will be easie getting into their company, who have no guard to keep any body out; and as easie by little compliances and flatteries to insinuate into their good Graces, who have not the sagacity to discern to what insidious purposes those blandishments are directed: and when they once begin to nibble at the Bait, to be pleased with the Courtship, 'tis great odds they do not escape the Hook.

18. Alas, how many poor innocent Creatures have been thus indiscernibly ensnared; have at first perhaps only liked the Wit and Raillery, perhaps the Language and Address, then the Freedom and good Humor, 'till at last they come to like the Person. It is therefore a most necessary caution for young Women, not to trust too much to their own conduct, but to own their dependance on those, to whom God and Nature has subjected them, and to look on it not as their restraint and burden, but as their shelter and protection. For where once the autority of a Parent comes to be despised, tho in

the lightest instance, it lays the foundation of utmost Disobedience. She that will not be prescrib'd to in the choise of her ordinary diverting Company, will less be so in choosing the fixt Companion of her Life: and we find it often eventually true, That those who govern themselves in the former, will not be govern'd by their Friends in the latter, but by pre-engagements of their own, prevent their elections for them.

20. And this is one of the highest Injuries they can do their Parents, who have such a native Right in them, that 'tis no less an Injustice then Disobedience to dispose of themselves without them. This right of the Parent is so undoubted, that we find God himself gives way to it, and will not suffer the most Holy pretence, no not that of a Vow, to invade it, as we may see his own stating of the Case, *Numb.* 30. How will he then resent it, to have this so indispensible a Law violated upon the impulse of an impotent Passion, an amorous Inclination? Nor is the folly less then the sin: they injure and afflict their Parents, but they generally ruin and undo themselves; and that upon a double account. First, as to the secular part: those that are so rash as to make such Matches, cannot be imagined so provident as to examine how agreeable 'tis to their Interest, or to contrive for any thing beyond the Marriage. The thoughts of their future temporal Conditions (like those of the Eternal) can find no room amidst their foolish Raptures, but as if Love were indeed that Deity which the Poets feigned it,

they

they depend on it for all, and take no farther care. And event do's commonly too soon instruct them in the deceitfulness of that Trust, Love being so unable to support them that it cannot maintain its self, but quickly expires when it has brought the Lovers into those straits from whence it cannot rescu them. So that indeed it do's but play the Decoy with them, brings them into the noose, and then retires. For when secular Wants begin to pinch them, all the Transports of their Kindness do usually convert into mutual Accusations, for having made each other miserable.

21. And indeed there is no reason to expect any better event, because in the second place they forfeit their title to the Divine Blessing. Nay they put themselves out of the capacity to ask it, it being a ridiculous Impudence to beg God to prosper the transgressions of his Law. Such Weddings seem to invoke only some of the Poetic Romantic Deities, *Venus* and *Hymen*, from whence they derive a happiness as fictitious as are the Gods that are to send it. Let all Virgins therefore religiously observe this part of Obedience to their Parents, that they may not only have their Benediction but Gods. And to that purpose let this be laid as a Fundamental Rule, That they never hearken to any proposal of Marriage made them from any other hand; but when any such Overture is made, divert the address from her self and direct it to her Parents, which will be the best test imaginable for any Pretender. For if he know himself worthy of her, he

will not fear to avow his design to them; and therefore if he decline that, 'tis a certain Symtom, he is conscious of something that he knows will not give a valuable consideration: so that this course will repel no Suitor but such as it is their Interest not to admit. Besides, 'tis most agreeable to the Virgin Modesty, which should make Marriage an act rather of their obedience then their choice; and they that think their Friends too slow paced in the matter, and seek to out-run them, give cause to suspect they are spurr'd on by somwhat too warm desires.

22. But as a Daughter is neither to anticipate, nor contradict the will of her Parent, so (to hang the ballance even) I must say she is not obliged to force her own, by marrying where she cannot love, for a negative voice in the case is sure as much the Childs right as the Parents. It is true, she ought well to examin the grounds of her aversion, and if they prove only childish and fanciful, should endeavor to correct them by reason and sober consideration: but if after all she cannot leave to hate, I think she should not proceed to Marry. I confess I see not how she can, without a Sacrilegious Hypocrisie, vow so solemnly to love, where she at the instant actually abhors: and where the married state is begun with such a Perjury, 'tis no wonder to find it continued on at the same rate, that other parts of the Vow be also violated, and that she observe the Negative part no more then the Positive, and as little forsake others, as she do's heartily

heartily cleave to her Husband. I fear this is a consequence whereof there are too many sad Instances now extant. For tho doubtless there are som Vertues which will hold out against all the temtations their aversions can give, nay which do at last even conquer those aversions, and render their duty as easie as they have kept it safe: yet we find there are but som that do so, that it is no inseparable property of the Sex, and therefore it is sure too hazardous an Experiment for any of them to venture on.

23. And if they may not upon the more generous motive of Obedience, much less may they upon the worse inducements of Avarice and Ambition. For a Woman to make a Vow to the Man, and yet intend only to marry his Fortune, or his Title, is the basest insincerity, and such as in any other kind of civil Contracts would not only have the infamy but the punishment of a Cheat. Nor will it at all secure them, that in this 'tis only liable to Gods Tribunal; for that is not like to make the doom less but more heavy, it being, as the Apostle witnesses, *a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, Heb. 10. 31. In a word, Marriage is Gods Ordinance, and should be considered as such, not made a stale to any unworthy design. And it may well be presum'd one cause why so few Matches are happy, that they are not built upon a right Foundation. Som are grounded upon Wealth, som on Beauty, too sandy bottoms God knows to raise any lasting Felicity on: whilst in the interim,

Vertu

Vertu and Piety, the only solid Basis for that Superstructure, are scarce ever consider'd. Thus God is commonly left out of the consultation. The Lawyers are resorted to to secure the Settlements, all sorts of Artificers to make up the Equipage, but he is neither adviſ'd with as to the Motives, nor scarce supplicated as to the event of Wedding. Indeed 'tis a deplorable sight to see with what lightness and unconcernedness young People go to that weightiest action of their Lives; that a Marriage-day is but a kind of Bacchanal, a more licensed avowed Revel; when if they duly consider'd it, 'tis the hinge upon which their future Life moves, which turns them over to a happy or miserable Being, and therefore ought to be enter'd upon with the greatest Seriousness and Devotion. Our Church adviſes excellently in the Preface to Matrimony, and I wish they would not only give it the hearing at the time, but make it their study a good while before: yea and the Marriage Vow too, which is so strict and awful a Bond, that methinks they had need well weigh every Branch of it ere they enter it, and by the ferventest Praiers implore that God, who is the Witness, to be their Assistant too in its performance.

SECT. III.

SECT. II.

Of Wives.

1. AND now having conducted the Virgin to the entrance of another State, I must shift the Scene, and attend her thither also. And here she is lanched into a wide Sea, that one relation of a Wife drawing after it many others. For as she Espouses the Man, so she do's his Obligations also; and whereever he by ties of Nature or Alliance ow's a Reverence or Kindness, she is no less a Debtor. Her Marriage is an adoption into his Family; and therefore she is to pay to every Branch of it, what their Stations there do respectively require: to define which more particularly, would be a work of more length then profit. I shall therefore confine the present Consideration to the relation she stands in to her Husband, and (what is usually concomitant with that) her Children, and her servants, and so shall consider her in the three capacities, of a Wife, a Mother, and a Mistress.

2. In that of a Wife, her duty has several respects, as it relates, first to his Person, secondly to his Reputation, thirdly to his Fortune. The first debt to his Person is Love, which we find set as the prime Article in the Marriage-Vow. And indeed that is the most Essential requisite: without this, it is only a Bargain and Compact, a Tyranny perhaps

on

on the Mans part, and a Slavery on the Womans. 'Tis Love only that cements the Hearts, and where that Union is wanting, 'tis but a shadow, a Carcass of Marriage. Therefore as it is very necessary to bring som degree of that to this State; so 'tis no less to maintain and improve it in it. This is it which facilitates all other duties of Marriage; makes the Yoke sit so lightly, that it rather pleases then galls. It should therefore be the study of Wives to preserve this Flame, that like the Vestal Fire it may never go out, and to that end carefully to guard it from all those things which are naturally apt to extinguish it: of which kind are all frowardness and little perverseness of humor, all sullen and morose behavior; which by taking off from the delight and complacency of Conversation, will by degrees wear off the kindness.

3. But of all, I know nothing more dangerous then that unhappy Passion of Jealousie; which tho 'tis said to be the Child of Love, yet, like the Viper, its Birth is the certain destruction of the Parent. As therefore they must be nicely careful to give their Husbands no color, no least umbrage for it; so should they be as resolute to resist all that occurs to themselves: be so far from that busie Curiosity, that industry to find causes of suspicion; that even where they presented themselves they should avert the consideration, put the most candid construction upon any doubtful action. And indeed, Charity in this instance has not more of the Dove then of the Serpent. It is infinitly the wisest

course

course, both in relation to her present quiet, and her future innocence. The entertaining a jealous fancy, is the admitting the most treacherous the most disturbing inmate in the world, and she opens her breast to a Fury that lets it in. 'Tis certainly one of the most enchanting frenzies imaginable, keeps her always in a most restless importunate search after that which she dreads and abhors to find, and makes her equally miserable when she is injured, and when she is not.

4. And as she totally looses her Ease, so 'tis odds but she will part also with som degrees of her Innocence. Jealousy is commonly attended with a black train: it musters all the forces of our irascible part to abet its quarrel, Wrath and Anger, Malice and Revenge: and by how much the female impotence to govern those passions is the greater, so much the more dangerous is it to admit that which will so surely set them in an uproar. For if *Jealousy* be, as the Wise Man saies, *the rage of a man*, Prov. 6.32. we may well think it may be the Fury, the Madness of a woman. And indeed all ages have given tragical instances of it, not only in the most indecent fierceness & clamor, but in the solemn mischiefs of actual Revenges. Nay 'tis to be doubted there have bin som whose malice has rebounded; who have ruined themselves in spight, have bin adulterous by way of retaliation, & taken more scandalous liberties then those they complained of in their Husbands. And when such enormous effects as these are the issues of Jealousy,

it ought to keep women on the ſtricteſt guard againſt it.

5. But perhaps it may be ſaid that ſom are not left to their Jealouſy and conjectures, but have more demonſtrative proofs. In this age 'tis indeed no ſtrange thing for men to publiſh their ſin as *Sodom*, and the offender does ſomtimes not diſcover but boaſt his Crime. In this caſe I confeſs 'twill be ſcarce poſſible to disbeleive him; but even here a wife has this advantage, that ſhe is out of the pain of Suſpence. She knows the utmoſt, and therefore is now at leſure to convert all that induſtry which ſhe would have uſed for the diſcovery, to fortify her ſelf againſt a known Calamity; which ſure ſhe may as well do in this as in any other; a patient Submiſſion being the one Catholicon in all diſtreſſes; and as the ſlighteſt can overwhelm us if we add our own impatience towards our ſinking, ſo the greateſt cannot if we deny it that aid. They are therefore far in the wrong, who, in caſe of this injury, purſu their husbands with virulencies and reproches. This is, as *Solomon* ſaies *Pro.* 25. 20. *The pouring vineger upon niter*, applying corroſives when balſoms are moſt needed, whereby they not only encreaſe their own ſmart, but render the wound incurable. They are not thunders and earthquakes, but ſoft gentle rains that cloſe the ſciſſures of the ground; and the breaches of Wedlock will never be cemented by ſtorms and loud outcries. Many men have bin made worſe, but ſcarce ever any better by it: for guilt covets

nothing

nothing more then an opportunity of recriminating; and where the husband can accuse the wives Bitterness, he thinks he needs no other apology for his own Lust.

6. A Wise Dissimulation, or very calm notice is sure the likeliest means of reclaiming: for where men have not wholly put off Humanity, there is a native compassion to a meek sufferer. We have naturally some regret to see a Lamb under the knife; whereas the impatient roaring of a Swine diverts our pitty; so that Patience in this case is as much the interest as duty of a Wife.

7. But there is another instance wherein that vertu has a yet severer trial, and that is when a Wife lies under the causeless jealousies of the husband, (I say causeless, for if they be just 'tis not so much a season for Patience, as for Repentance and reformation.) This is sure one of the greatest Calamities that can befal a vertuous woman; who as she accounts nothing so dear as her loialty and honor, so thinks no infelicity can equal the aspersing of those, especially when it is from him, to whom she has bin the most solicitous to approve her self. Yet God, who permits nothing but what he directs to some wise and gracious end, has an overruling hand in this as well as in all other events of life; and therefore it becomes every woman in that condition, to examin strictly what she has don to provoke so severe a scourge. For tho her heart condemn her not of any Falsness to her husband, yet probably it may of many Disloi-

alties to her God; and then she is humbly to accept even of this traducing of her Innocence, as the punishment of her iniquity, and bear it with the same temper wherewith *David* did the unjust revilings of Shimei, 2. *Kings* 16. 10. *Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.*

8. And when she hath made this penitent reflection on her real guilts, she may then with more courage encounter those imaginary ones which are charged on her: wherein she is to use all prudent and regular means for her justification, that being a debt she owes to truth, and her own fame. But if after all the suspicion remains still fixed (as commonly those which are the most unreasonable are the most obstinate;) she may still solace her self in her Integrity, and Gods approbation of it: nor ought she to think her self desolate, that has her appeal open to heaven. Therefore whilst she can look both inward and upward with comfort, why should she chose to fix her eies only on the object of her grief? and whilst her own complaint is of defamation, why should she so dishonor God and a good Conscience, as to shew any thing can be more forcible to oppress, then they are to relieve and support? And if she may not indulge to Grief, much less may she to Anger, and Bitterness.

9. Indeed if she consider how painful a passion Jealousy is, her husband will more need her pity, who tho he be unjust to her, is yet cruel to himself. And as we do not use to hate & malign those Lunatics, who in their fits beat their friends, and cut

cut and gash themselves, but rather make it our care to put all harmful engines out of their way; so should the wife not despitefully ruminate upon the injury, but wisely contrive to avert his temptations to more, by denying her self even the most innocent liberties, if she see they dissatisfy him. I know there have bin som of another opinion, and as if they thought Jealousy were to be cured by majoration, have in an angry contemt don things to inflame it, put on an unwonted freedom and jollity, to shew their husbands how little they had secur'd themselves by their distrust. But this as it is no Christian, so I conceive it is no prudent expedient: it serves to strengthen not only the husbands suspicion, but his party too, and make many others of his mind: and 'tis a little to be feared, that by using so to brave the Jealousy, they may at last come to verify it. I have bin the longer on this theme, because as Jealousy is the most fatal pest of a married life, so I think it more ordinarily occurs among people of Quality, and with the worst and most durable effects. Yet what ever pretences people may take hence, the marriage vow is too fast a knot to be loosned by fancies and Chimeras: let a woman therefore be the person suspecting or suspected, neither will absolve her from that Love to her husband she has sworn to pay.

10. BUT alas what hope is there that these greater temptations shall be resisted, when we see every the slightest disgust is now adaies too strong for the matrimonial Love. Nay indeed it do's of course

course fall off of it self; which is an event so much expected, that 'tis no wonder to see it expire with the first circuit of the moon; but it is every bodies admiration to see it last one of the sun. And sometimes it vanishes so cleerly, as not to leave so much as a shadow behind it, not so much as the formalities of Marriage: one bed, one house cannot hold them, as if they had bin put together like caseshot in a gun, only that they might the more forcibly scatter several waies. Nay as if this were designed and intended in the first addresses unto marriage, a separate maintenance is of course afore hand contracted for, and becomes as solemn a part of the settlement, as a Jointure is. *Plutarch* observes of the ancient Romans, that for 230. years after the founding of their State, there never was one example of any married couple that separated: it is not likely they could have a more binding form of marriage then ours is, the difference must lie between their Veracity & our Falseness.

11. But even amongst those who desert not each other, too many do mutually fall from that entireness and affection which is the soul of marriage; and to help on the declination, there are fashionable Maxims taken up, to make men and their wives the greatest strangers to each other. Thus 'tis pronounced a piece of ill Breeding, a sign of a country Gentleman, to see a man go abroad with his own wife (I suppose those who brought up these rules are not to seek what use too make of them.) And were the time of most of the modish couples

couples computed, 'rwould be found they are but few of their waking hours (I might say minutes) together: so that if nothing else, meer desuetude and intermission of conversation must needs allay, if not quite extinguish their kindness. But I hope there are yet many who do not think the autority of a fashion greater then that of a vow: and such will still think it their duty both to own and cherish that kindness and affection they have so solemnly promis'd.

13. ANOTHER debt to the person of a husband is Fidelity: for as she has espoused all his interests, so she is oblig'd to be true to them, to keep all his secrets, to inform him of his dangers, yea and in a mild and gentle manner to admonish him of his faults. This is the most genuine act of friendship; therefore she who is placed in the neerest and most intimate degree of that relation, must not be wanting in it. She that lies in his bosom should be a kind of second Conscience to him, by putting him in mind both of his duty and his aberration: and as long as she can be but patiently heard, 'tis her sin to omit it; 'tis the greatest trechery to his noblest, to his immortal part, and such as the most officious cares of his other interest can never expiate. Nay indeed she is unfaithful to her self in it, there being nothing that do's so much secure the happiness of a Wife as the Vertu and Piety of the Husband. Yet, tho this is to have her chiefest care, as being his principal interest, she is to neglect none of the inferior, but contribute her utmost

utmost to his advantage in all his concerns.

13. Beyond all these the matrimonial fidelity has a special notion as it relates to the Bed; & in that the wife is to be most severely scrupulous, & never to admit so much as a thought or imagination, much less any parly or treaty contrary to her loialty. Tis true wantonness is one of the foulest blots that can stain any of the sex; but 'tis infinitly more odious in the married, it being in them an accumulation of crimes, perjury added to uncleanness, the infamy of their family superstructed upon their own. And accordingly all laws have made a difference in their punishments. Adultery was by Gods own award punisht with death among the Jews, *Lev.* 20. 10. And it seems it was so agreeable to natural Justice, that divers other nations did the like; and I know no reason, but the difficulty of detection, that should any where give it a milder sentence. The son of *Sirach* has excellently describ'd the several gradations of the guilt, *Eccles.* 23. 1. which I shall desire the Reader to consult: which who so do's must certainly wonder at the Alchymy of this age, that from such a mass of shame and infamy can extract matter of confidence: that those who lie under so many brands and stigmas, are so far from hiding their faces, that none shew them with so much boldness, and the assurance of the guilty far exceeds that of the innocent. But impudence is a slender shelter for guilt, and serves rather to betray then hide: so that they are not able to outface the opinions of men, much less can they

they the judgments of God; who as he was solemnly invok'd as Witness to their Vow, so by his Omnipresence is against their wills a Witness too of its violations.

14. Another Duty to the person of the Husband is Obedience, a word of a very harsh sound in the ears of som Wives, but is certainly the duty of all: and that not only by their promise of it, tho that were sufficient, but from an original of much older date, it being the mulct that was laid upon the first Womans disobedience to God, that she (and all derived from her) should be subject to the Husband; so that the contending for superiority, is an attemt to reverse that Fundamental Law, which is almost as ancient as the World. But surely God, with whom there is no shadow of change, will not make Acts of repeal to satisfie the petulancy of a few masterless Women. That Statute will still stand in force, and if it cannot awe them into an Observance, will not fail to consign them to Punishment. And indeed this fault is commonly its own lictor, and do's anticipate (tho not avert) its final doom. The imperiousness of a Woman do's often raise those Storms, wherein her self is Shipwrack'd. How pleasantly might many Women have lived, if they had not affected Dominion? Nay, how much of their Will might they have had, if they had not strugled for it? For let a Man be of never so gentle a Temper (unless his Head be softer then his Heart) such a Usurpation will awake him to assert his Right. But if he be of a sowre severe Nature, if he

have as great a desire of Rule as she, back'd with a much better Title, what Tempests, what Hurricanes must two such opposite Winds produce? And at last 'tis commonly the Wives lot, after an uncreditable unjust War, to make as disadvantageous a Peace; this (like all other ineffective Rebellions) serving to straiten her Yoke, to turn an ingenuous Subjection into a slavish Servitude: so that certainly it is not only the Virtu, but the Wisdom of Wives to do that upon Duty, which at last they must (with more unsupportable Circumstances) do upon Necessity.

15. And as they ow these Severals to the person of the Husband, so there is also a debt to his Reputation. This they are to be extremely tender of, to advance it, by making all that is good in him as conspicuous, as public as they can; setting his Worth in the clearest light, but putting his infirmities in the Shade; casting a Veil upon those to skreen them from the eies of others, nay (as far as is possible) from their own two; there being nothing acquir'd to the Wife by contemplating the Husbands weakness, but a temtation of despising him; which tho bad enough in it self, is yet rendred worse by that train of mischievous consequences which usually attend it. In case therefore of any notable Imperfections in him, her safest way will be to consider them no farther then she can be instrumental to the curing them; but to divert from those, and reflect upon her own, which perhaps if impartially weighed, may ballance, if not overpoise his.

his. And indeed those Wives who are apt to blaze their Husbands Faults, do shew that they have either little adverted to their own, or else find them so great, that they are forced to that Art of diversion, and seek in his Infamy to drown theirs. But that project is a little unlucky, for nothing do's in sober Judges, create greater prejudice to a Woman, then to see her forward in impeaching her Husband.

16. BUT besides this immediate tenderness of his Reputation, there is another by way of reflection, which consists in a care that she her self do nothing which may redound to his dishonor. There is so strict a Union between a Man and his Wife, that the Law counts them one Person, and consequently they can have no divided Interest, so that the misbehavior of the Woman reflects ignominiously on the Man; it therefore concerns them, as well upon their Husbands as their own account, to abstain even from all appearance of evil, and provide that themselves be (what *Cesar* is said to have requir'd of his Wife) not only without guilt, but without scandal also.

17. ANOTHER part of the Wives Duty relates to her Husbands Fortune, the management whereof is not ordinarily the Wives Province, but where the Husband thinks fit to make it so, she is oblig'd to administer it with her best Care and Industry; not by any neglect of hers to give others opportunity of defrauding him: yet on the other side, not by an immoderate tenacity or griping, to bring upon him and her self the reproach, and which is

worse, the Curse that attends Exaction and Oppression. But this is not usually the Wives field of action, tho he that shall consider the description which *Solomon* gives of a vertuous Wife, *Prov.* 31. will be apt to think her Province is not so narrow and confin'd, as the humor of the Age would represent it. He tells us, *That she seeks wool and flax, and works diligently with her hands: that she is like the merchants ships, and brings her food from far.* That *she considers a field, and buys it, and with the fruit of her hands plants a vineyard, &c.* And least this should be imagin'd to be the Character of a mean Country Dame, he adds, That *her household is clothed in scarlet*, and that *her husband sits among the elders of the land.* It were easie to give instances from History, of the advantageous menage and active industry of Wives, not only in single Persons, but whole Nations. But nothing can be more pregnant, then that among the Romans: in the very height and flourish of the Empire, *Augustus* himself *scarce wore any thing but of the manufacture of his wife, his sister, daughters, and nieces*, as *Suetonius* assures us. Should the gay *lilies of our fields, which neither sow nor spin, nor gather into barns*, be exempted from furnishing others, and left to cloth themselves, 'tis to be doubted they would reverse our Saviors Parallel of *Solomons glories*, and no beggar in all his rags *would be araied like one of these*, Luke 12. 27.

18. But we will be yet more kind, and impose only negative thrift on the Wife, not to wast and embezle

embezle her Husbands Estate, but to confine her Expences within such limits as that can easily admit; a Caution, which if all Women had observ'd, many noble Families had bin preserv'd, of which there now remains no other Memorial, but that they fell a Sacrifice to the profuse Vanity of a Woman; and I fear, this Age is like to provide many more such Monuments for the next. Our Ladies, as if they emulated the Roman Luxury (which *Seneca* and *Pliny* describe with so much indignation) do sometimes wear about them the Revenues of a rich Family; and those that cannot reach to that, shew how much 'tis against their wills they fall lower, by the vast variety and excess of such things as they can possibly compass; so much extravagance not only in their own Dress, but that of their Houses and Apartments, as if their vanity, like the Leprosie we read of, *Lev.* 14. had infected the very Walls. And indeed, 'tis a very spreading fretting one, for the Furniture oft consumes the House, and the House consumes the Land: so that if som Gentlemen were to calculate their Estates, they might reduce all to the Inventory of *Scopias* the *Thessalian*, who profest his All lay only in such Toies as did him no good. Women are now skilful Chymists, and can quickly turn their Husbands Earth into Gold: but they pursue the Experiment too far, make that Gold too volatile, and let it all vapor away in insignificant (tho gaudy) Trifles.

19. Nor is it ever like to be otherwise with those

thoſe that immoderatly affect the Town, that Forge of Vanity, which ſupplies a perpetual Spring of new temtations. 'Tis true, there are ſom Ladies who are neceſſarily engaged to be there: their Husbands Employments or Fortunes have mark'd that out as their proper ſtation, and where the ground of their ſtay is their duty, there is more reaſon to hope it will not betray them to ill, for temtations are moſt apt to aſſault ſtraglers, thoſe that put themſelves out of their proper road. And truly I ſee not who can be more properly be ſaid to be ſo, then thoſe Women whoſe means of ſubſiſtence lies in the Country, and yet will ſpend it no where but at *London*, which ſeems to carry ſomthing of oppoſition to Gods Providence, who ſurely never cauſed their lot to fall, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *in a fair ground, in goodly heritages*, Pſal. 16. with an intent they ſhould never inhabit them. The 12. Tribes of *Iſrael* had their peculiar Portions in *Canaan* aſſign'd them by lot, *Joſ.* 14. 2. and every one acquieſced in his part, dwelt in his own Inheritance: had they bin impatient of living any where but in the Metropolis, had they all crouded to *Jeruſalem*, all the reſt of the Land would have bin as deſolate before the Captivity as it was after, none would have bin left but ſuch as *Nabuzaradan* permitted to ſtay, *Jer.* 52. 16. *ſome of the poor to dreſs the vines, and to till the ground.* And truly, the ſame is like to be the fate of this Nation, if this humor go's on as it has begun; which may in time prove as miſchievous to the public, as it daily is to private Families.

20. But

20. But besides this 'tis yet farther to be consider'd, that where God gives an estate, he as the supreme Landlord affixes something of duty, laies a kind of rent charge upon it, expects it should maintain both hospitality and charity; and sure both these are fittest to be don upon the place whence the ability of them rises. All public taxes use to be levyed where the estate lies, and I know not why these which are Gods assessments upon it, should not be paid there too. When a Gentlmans land becomes profitable unto him by the sweat and labor of his poor neighbors and tenants, 'twill be a kind of *muzling the ox* 1 *Cor.*9.9. if they never tast of the fruit of their pains, if they shall never have the refreshment of a good meal, or an alms; which they are not very like to meet with, if all the profits be sent up to maintain an equipage, and keep up a parade in Town. But alas 'tis often not only the annual profits that go that way, not only the crop, but the soil too; those luxuries usually prey upon the vitals, eat out the very heart of an estate, and many have stay'd in the Town 'til they have nothing left in the Country to retire to.

21. Now where this proceeds from the Wife, what account can she give to her Husband, whose easiness and indulgence (for that must be suppos'd in the case) she has so abus'd? as also to her posterity and family who for her pride must be brought low, reduc'd to a condition beneath their quality, because she affected to live above it? But she will yet worse answer it to her self, on whom she has brought

brought not only the inconvenience but the guilt. 'Tis sure a lofty mind will feel smart enough of a fall, a diminution, much more an indigence will be sufficiently grievous to a vain and lavish humor; yet here it will farther have an additional sting from the conscience, that she ows it only to her own pride and folly, a most imbitering consideration, & such as advances the affliction beyond that of a more innocent poverty, as much as the pain of an envenom'd arrow exceeds that of another.

22. BUT the saddest reckoning of all is that which she is to make to God, who has declar'd he hates robbery tho for a burnt offering to himself. How will he then detest this robbery this impoverishing of the husband, when 'tis only to make an oblation to vanity and excess? It should therefore be the care of all Wives to keep themselves from a guilt for which God & man, yea and themselves also shall equally accuse them, and to keep their expences within such limits, that as bees suck but do not violate or deface the flowers, so they as joint proprietaries with the husbands, may enjoy but not devour and destroy his fortune.

23. I have now run thro the duties to be perform'd unto the Husband, wherein I have not used the exactness of a casuist in curiously anatomizing every part, and shewing all the most minute particulars reducible to each head. I have only drawn out the greater lines, and insisted on those wherein Wives are most frequently deficient. I shall only add this caution, that whatever is duty to the husband

and, is equally so, be he good or ill. The Apostle commands subjection and fidelity, even to Heathen Husbands, 1 *Pet.* 3. 12. and 'tis not now their defect either in Piety or Morality, that can absolve the Wife. For, besides the inconvenience of making her duty precarious and liable to be subtracted upon every pretence of demerit, she has by solemn Contract renounc'd that liberty, and in her Marriage-vow taken him for better for worse; and it is too late *after Vows to make enquiry*, Prov. 20. 25. to seek to break loose from that Bond of her Soul; and how uneasie soever the perverseness of the Husband may render it, he cannot thereby make it less, but more rewardable by God. For, what the Apostle speaks in the case of Servants, is no less appliable to this, 1 *Pet.* 2. 19. for *this is thankworthy, if for conscience towards God ye endure grief, suffering wrongfully.* Whatever duty is perform'd by Man with aspect on God, he owns as to himself; so that how unworthy soever the Husband may be, the Wife cannot misplace her observance, whilst she finally terminates it on that infinit Goodness and Majesty to whom no love or obedience can be enough.

24. From this relation of a Wife, there ordinarily springs another, that of a Mother, to which there belongs a distinct duty, which may be branched into many severals: but I shall at present only reduce them to two Heads, Love and Care. A Mother is a title of so much Tenderness, that we find it borrowed by our common Dialect to ex-

preſs the moſt exuberant Kindneſs; nay, even in Sacred Stile it has the ſame uſe, and is often ſet to the higheſt Example our weakneſs can comprehend of the Divine Compaſſions. So that Nature ſeems ſufficiently to have ſecur'd the love of Mothers to their Children, without the aid of any poſitive Law. Yet we find this, (as other Inſtincts of Nature) is ſomtimes violated, and oftner perverted and applied to miſtaken purpoſes: the firſt is by a defect of Love; the other, by an imprudent exceſs of it: the defect do's, I preſume, more rarely occur then the other; yet it doth ſomtimes happen, and that either from a moroſe ſowrneſs of humor, or elſe from too vehement an intention of ſomthing elſe.

25. Some Women have ſuch a ruggedneſs of Nature, that they can love nothing, the ugly Paſſions of Anger and Envy have, like *Pharaoh*'s lean Kine, eat up the more amiable of Love and Joy. *Plato* was wont to adviſe crabbed auſtere Tempers, to Sacrifice to the *Graces*; and ſuch as theſe had need have a great deal of Chriſtian Philoſophy, to allay and ſweeten their native Bitterneſs. But there are others that are not void of the affection of Love, but 'tis foreſtall'd by ſome other Object, and ſo diverted from their Children. And 'tis a little to be doubted, thoſe Objects which ſo divert are none of the beſt, for the Wiſdom of God has diſpoſed all duty into ſuch a Harmony and Conſent of Parts that one interferes not with another. If we love any prohibited thing, all the regular Objects of our

kind-

kindness will agree well enough, and one need never supplant another. And indeed 'tis oft observable, that those Women who immoderatly love their own Pleasures, do least regard their Children; they look on them as Clogs to keep them within doors, and think their adventuring to them, will hinder their free range abroad; those are turn'd off to the care of a Nurse or Maid, whil'st perhaps a Dog or a Monkey is thought worthy their own attendance.

26. *Plutarch* relates it as a Sarcasm of *Cesars* to some Foreigners whom he saw (at *Rome*) strangely fond of such little Animals, that he asked them, Whether the Women in their Country had no Children; thereby intimating, how unreasonable it was for those that had, to bestow their Caresses on such Creatures. And surely he would not have given a milder Reprimand to some of our Ladies, who not only please, but pride themselves in those little Brutes, shew them to all Comers, when perhaps you may converse with them divers daies, before you shall, by any mention of theirs, know that they have a Child.

27. To this defect of Love, many are apt to impute the Mothers transferring the Nursing her Child to another. I am not forward to pronounce of it, being loth to involve so many as I then must in the imputation of unnaturalness; I rather think it is taken up as a piece of State and Greatness, for no other motive, but what is founded in their Quality, could so universally prevail with all that are

of it. But sure this is one of the vain Punctilios wherewith this Age abounds. For whatever rank the Mother is of, the Child carries proportion to it, and there is the same equality between the greatest Lady and her own Child, as is between the meanest Beggar and hers; tho indeed if there were any condescension in it, the aversions of that ought not to outweigh the impulses of Nature, and the many advantages the Child may receive by taking its Nourishment whence it derived its Substance. And therefore, tho I will not be too positive in asserting the necessity, yet I confess, I cannot but look with reverence upon those few Persons of Honor, who have broke thro an unreasonable Custom, and preferred the good of their Children before that fantastic priviledg of Greatness. And such must in all Justice be acknowledged to have given a much better evidence of their love to their Children, then the others.

28. There is in *A. Gellius*, in his 14th Book, so fine a Discourse on this subject, where *Favorinus* the Philosopher is introduced, perswading a Noble Lady, notwithstanding the usual Excuses, to nurse her Child; that nothing besides the length, could tempt me to omit the transcribing it: unless happily the little success, which a Noble Person of the same Sex here concern'd, I mean the Countess of *Lincoln*, in the Ingenious Book wrote by her, and call'd her Nursery, be a sufficient ground of despairing to convince by any thing that can be said. However, let these delicate ones consider

sider the severe words of the Prophet, *Lament.* 4. 3. *The sea monsters draw out the breast, they give suck to their young ones: the daughter of my people is become cruel like the ostrich in the Wilderness, who is hardned against her young ones, as tho they were not hers: her labor is in vain without fear, because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.* Job. 39. 16.

29. But as there may be a fault in the defect, so there may be also in the excess of love. God is the only unlimited object of our Love, towards all others 'tis easie to become inordinate, and in no instance more then in this of children. The love of a parent is descending, and all things move most violently downwards: so that whereas that of children to their parents commonly needs a spur, this of the parent often needs a bridle, especially that of the Mother, which (by strength of feminine passion) does usually exceed the love of the Father. Now to regulate this affection, she is to advert to these two rules, first that she hurt not her self by it, and secondly that she hurt not her children. Of the first: she is in danger if she suffer that Human affection to swell beyond its banks, so as to come in any competition with the Divine. This is to make an Idol of her child, for every thing is so to us, which rivals the love of God in our hearts, and he who owns the title of a Jealous God, may be provoked as well by the bowing our souls to a living image, as the prostration of our bodies to a dead. Accordingly we oft see the effects of his Jealousy

louſie in this particular. The doting affection of the Mother, is frequently puniſh'd with the untimely death of the Children; or if not with that, 'tis many times with a ſeverer ſcourge: they live (but as it was foretold to *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* 2. 33.) *to grieve her eyes, and to conſume her heart*, to be ruinous to themſelves, and afflictions to their friends, and to force their unhappy mothers to that ſad acclamation *Luke* 23. 29. *Bleſſed are the wombs which bare not.*

30. And as this proves often true, when the dotage is general upon all the Children, ſo do's it oftner when 'tis more partial and fix'd upon any one: that Darling which ſhe makes the only object of her Joy, uſually becomes that of her Sorrow. It is an ordinary infirmity in Parents, to heap all their kindneſs upon one to the defrauding of the reſt, and too many times upon very undue motives: a little excelling in point of Beauty turns the ſcales, when perhaps many more ſolid Excellencies are the counterpoiſe. And ſurely this is not only unjuſt but irrational in the Parent: for all peculiarity of favor in a Superior ſhould be diſpene'd either by way of Reward, or Encouragement, and neither of thoſe ends can take place, where 'tis only the outward form that is conſider'd. For that cannot be rewardable, to which the party has contributed nothing; and the *Pſalmiſt* will tell us, That 'tis God that hath made us, and not we our ſelves, *Pſalm* 100. 2. And as little room is there for the other end, that of encouragement. For as our Savior tells us, *Mat.* 6. none can add a cubit to his ſtature,

nor

nor make one hair white or black: 'tis certain themselves cannot really do either, tho by the aid of Artificial Hypocrisie they frequently appear to do both. But those are Arts which neither deserve nor want encouragement: the natural Beauty must have its increase from the same source whence it derived its being. There is therefore no reasonable account to be given, why a Child should be preferr'd for any such exterior excellency.

31. The only justifiable ground of partiality to Children is their Vertu, for to that their own choice concurs, and so may intitle them to reward; and 'tis also in their power to advance, and so encouragements are not cast away upon them. Nay, the influences of those may extend farther, and provoke a vertuous emulation in the rest. But then the mother must so manage it, as to evidence that 'tis no inequality in her own inclination, but meerly the force of the others desert, not the Person, but the Goodness that biasses her: and when Vertu is known to be the only ingratiating Quality, they will at once learn the way to become hers and Gods Favorites. And unless it be upon this one design, 'tis a very unsafe thing for a Parent to make any partial discrimination among Children, which is sure to tempt the more neglected, both to repine at her, and envy her Darlings. And oftentimes such seeds of rancor have bin by that means sowed in Children, as have bin hard to eradicate in their riper Years. Nor is the mischief less which she do's to her Fondlings, who besides that they are ex-

expos'd to the malice of the reſt, are uſually ſpoild by it, made inſolent and untractable, perhaps their whole lives after: for where the Mothers affection is unbridled, commonly the Childs will is ſo too, her fondneſs ſuperſeding that diſcipline and correction, which ſhould, as the Wiſe Man ſpeaks, *bow down its neck from its youth.*

32. And the like may be ſaid where the indulgence is more univerſal to all the Children; which is in one reſpect worſe then the partial, becauſe it ſpoils more, not one or two, but all the brood. The doting love of a Mother blinds her eies, that ſhe cannot ſee their faults; manacles her hands, that ſhe cannot chaſtiſe them, and ſo their Vices are permitted to grow up with themſelves. As their Joints knit and gather ſtrength, ſo do their ill habits, till at laſt they are confirm'd into an Obſtinacy; ſo ſetting them in a perfect oppoſition to that Pattern they ſhould imitate: for as Chriſts childhood *increaſt in wiſdom*, and the Divine Favor, *Luk.* 2. ſo do theirs in all thoſe provoking follies, which may avert both the love of God and Man. And alas what recompence can the little blandiſhments and careſſes of a Mother make her Children, for ſuch important, ſuch ineſtimable miſchiefs? So that ſhe that will be really kind, muſt temper her Indulgence with a prudent ſeverity, or elſe ſhe eminently violates the ſecond rule, by which ſhe ſhould regulate her love, and do's that to her Children, which *Jacob* fear'd from his Father, *Gen.* 27. *Brings a curſe upon them, and not a bleſſing.*

33. Indeed

33. Indeed the best way of approving their Love, is by well discharging the other Branch of their duty, that of Care. Without this, all the most passionate raptures of Kindness are but an aiery Apparition, a fantastic Scene, and will no more advantage a Child, then the whole Shambles in Picture can feed and nurish it. Now this care is not a temporary, momentary Duty, for some one critical instant; but is to attend the Child thro the several stages of its Minority, *viz.* Infancy, Childhood, and Youth. The very first part of their Infancy, is a season only for those Cares which concern their Bodies, providing for their careful Attendance, and all other things conducing to the strengthning their Constitutions, and laying a foundation for future Health and Vigor. Which is their interest not only upon a Bodily, but upon an Intellectual account, the good temperature of the Body being a great aid towards the free operations of the Mind. And therefore *Socrates*, and other Philosophers, much recommend to their Disciples the care of Health, as that which freed the Soul from many incumbrances in its pursuit of Knowledg: and it was the comprehensive Praier of the Poet, *That the Gods would grant a sound Mind in a healthful Body.*

34. But this Health is not alwaies the consequent of a very nice and tender Breeding, but is very oft overthrown by it; and if Ladies could but find in their hearts to try it, they would, I doubt not, find, that the inuring them to moderate Hardships, would

much more conduce to the eſtabliſhing and fortifying their Conſtitutions.

35. Beyond all this, the care for their Exterior is ſoon overtaken by a more important one, that of their Interior, in the timing of which there ſeems to be a very common miſtake in the World. We look upon the ſeven Years of Infancy, as the life meerly of an Animal, to be ſpent only in the entertainments of Senſe: and as we uſe not to yoak Calves, or back yong Colts, ſo we think our Children are for a while to be left at the ſame liberty, to have no reſtraint put on any of their Paſſions. Nay many times we excite and foment them, teach Children to be angry and envious, proud and ſullen, as if we fear'd their Natural Propenſions to all theſe were too faint, and wanted the help of Inſtitutions. But ſurely this is a great and pernicious Error, and this ſuppoſing Children to be ſo long Brutes, is the way to make them ſo longer. The Patrons of Atheiſm make it a moſt conſtant Topic in the diſparagement of Religion, that 'tis owed to the prejudices infuſed in the firſt Infancy: 'twere to be wiſht, that this Objection might ſo far be complied with, that the fear of God, the love of Virtu, and hatred of Vice, might have the firſt poſſeſſion of the Soul; and they be made to moderate their Paſſions, as ſoon as they are in a capacity to have them excited and engaged.

36. And truly, if we will obſerve it, we may ſee very early dawnings of reaſon in Infants, which would ſooner come to a brightneſs, if we would betimes

betimes set to the scattering of those Passions which eclipse and darken it. A Child will quickly be taught to know what pleases or displeases a Parent, and by a very little tast of Reward or Punishment will learn to do the one, and avoid the other: and when this is don, the Parent has gain'd the fundamental Point, *That of obedience*, and may superstruct on it what she pleases, and then 'tis her fault if the Child be not by easie and insensible degrees moulded into a right form. 'Tis at first all one to the Child, whether he name God in an Oath or in his Praiers; but a Mother by Punishing the one, and Rewarding the other, will quickly bring him to know there is a difference, and so proportionably in other Instances. As to the way of Discipline, it may not be amiss to observe, That when there is occasion for Severity, 'tis better to aw by actual Punishment then Terror, and never to make use of Infinit and Invisible Affrightments, the beloved methods of Nurses and Servants, such as are the menacing of Sprights and Mormo's, and leaving in the dark, that frequently make dastardly and timerous Impressions, which a long Age scarcely wears off.

37. A sober sense of things, is to be impressed by treatable means, and this will be don with most ease, both to the Parent and Child, the sooner 'tis set upon. The will of a tender Infant, is like its Limbs, supple and pliant, but time confirms it, and custom hardens it: so 'tis a cruel Indulgence to the poor Creature, to let it contract such Habits, which must cost him so deer the breaking, or dearer if

never broken. And if this early care be taken of the Infancy, 'twill much eaſe the next part, that of the Childhood; for where the Iron ſinew in the neck is broken, where the native Stubbornneſs is ſubdued ſo early, the Yoke will ſit eaſie, all ſucceeding parts of Diſcipline will come with more facility and profit. The care proper to this Age, is, the inſtructing in all parts of uſeful Knowledg, of which as the Divine, for the excellency both of its nature and its end, muſt be firſt ranked, ſo ſhould it be firſt and moſt induſtriouſly cultivated, and by all endearing methods impreſt, not only on the Underſtanding, but the Heart. Piety and Vertu ſhould be propoſ'd as the moſt amiable, as well as neceſſary things, and they ſhould be invited not only to know, but love them.

38 This part of Learning is equally competent to both Sexes, and therefore when the Sons are removed from under the Mothers tuition, and ſent to more public places of Erudition, her Province is ſtill the ſame as to her Daughters, to whom ſhe ſhould not only Preach, but exemplify it in her own Practice, no Precepts penetrating ſo much into Youth, as thoſe that are ſo inforc'd. And in order to this, I ſhould commend to Mothers, the being as much with them as they can, and taking the perſonal Inſpection of them; not to turn them off wholly to Servants, no nor yet Governeſſes, but frequently themſelves to examin how they proceed in the Speculative part of Knowledg, and no leſs frequently exhort them to the Practic.

39. Mar-

39. Marcus Cato would not let his son learn of his Slave, as disdaining a Child should ow so considerable a benefit to so servile a Person; and if he thought the meer teaching of Grammar too great a charge for such a one, surely the whole Institution of Youth is a much greater, it being that on which, not only a few outward Accomplishments, but even their Eternity depends. The great *Cornelia*, Mother of the *Gracchi*, and *Aurelia* the Mother of *Augustus*, thought it worth their pains to be Governesses. And the truth is, the Soul of a Child is a little too precious a Trust to commit wholly to the diligence and care of a mercenary Servant. Or if they happen not to want those Qualifications, yet 'tis very possible they may Prudence, of which there is no small degree requisite to the Instructing of Youth, too great a remisness or severity being equally destructive in that Affair. And indeed, besides these immediat, there are som other collateral Benefits consequent to the Mothers performing that Office: 'twill bring her and her Children into an Intimacy and Conversation, give her an acquaintance with their several Capacities and Humors; for want of which, many Parents have erred in their Conduct, one sort of Treatment being not fit for all Children, and the distinguishing that depending wholly on their discerning their particular Tempers, which cannot well be don without som converse with them.

40. Besides, by this they will be witnesses how they dispose their Time, that they neither loose it by

by doing nothing, nor yet misemploy it by doing ill. And indeed there is scarce any part of the Parents care more important then this, Idleness being no farther removed from Vice, then a Cause is from its immediat Effect. Therefore if Children be permitted to trifle away their Time, they will soon learn to trifle away their Innocence also. So that 'tis highly necessary that they be provided of a succession of Emploiments, that by the variety they may be insensibly drawn on. Nay methinks, it might very well be contrived that their Recreations might sometimes consist of such ingenuous Exercises, that they may at once both play and learn.

41. There is yet another good effect of the Mothers presence with the Children (which is perhaps no less material then any of the former:) 'tis, that by this associating them with her self, she prevents the danger of worse Society. Children, if the Parents allow them not their company, are necessarily cast upon that of Servants, then which there is scarce a greater danger that attends Youth. For besides that that low sort of converse debases their Minds, makes them mean and sordid, it often corrupts their Manners too; Children usually not receiving more pestilent Infusions from any then such. Servants that desire to ingratiate themselves, and have no laudable quality whereby to do it, must first endeavor to ingratiate Vice to them, and then by their officious ministeries in that, have a ready way of introducing themselves into favor. Perhaps this will be thought to concern only the

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Maſculin part of Children, and that the Female, who are commonly in a diſtinct Apartment, and converſe only with their own Sex, are more ſecure. But I would not adviſe Mothers to depend too much on that, for they are no ſurer that their Daughters ſhall not converſe with Men, nay Men of the meaner ſort too, then that their Maids and attendants ſhall not do ſo. And when 'tis conſider'd, how apt thoſe are to entertain, if not to invite Amours, 'tis not very probable the Rooms where they quarter ſhall be inacceſſable to thoſe they affect. And it were much ſafer for Children to be in the moſt public concourſe of Men, then to be witneſſes and obſervers of the private Intrigues of ſuch Lovers. The memories of Youth are very tenacious, and if they once be tainted with any indecent thing, will be apt to recollect it, 'till at laſt perhaps they come to tranſcribe it. 'Tis therefore in this reſpect a very uſeful part of the Mothers care, to make her ſelf company to her Daughters, to prevent the dangers of a more unequal and infectious Converſe.

42. But if this be uſeful in Childhood, 'tis no leſs then neceſſary in the next Period of their time, when they arrive near the growth and age of Women. Then indeed the Mother ſhould not only make them her Companions, but her Friends, allow them ſuch a kind, yet modeſt Freedom, that they may have a complacence in her Company, and not be temted to ſeek it among their Inferiors. That the belief of their kindneſs may ſupplant the pretenſions of thoſe meaner Sycophants, who by little flatteries

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endeavor to ſcrew themſelves into their good opinion, and become their Confidents: then which there is nothing more miſchievous, thoſe private Cabals that are held with ſuch, ſerving only to render them mutinous againſt their Parents; theſe Family Incendiaries, like thoſe in the State and Church, ſtill inculcating the one grand Principle of Liberty, a word ſo charming to our depraved Nature, and eſpecially to Youth, that they ſhould not be truſted with ſuch Lectures. Beſides thoſe intimacies are often Introductions to worſe; many ſcandalous Amours and unequal Matches having had their riſe from them. It ſhould therefore be the buſineſs of Mothers to prevent all ſuch pernicious Leagues, by preingaging them in more ſafe Familiarities, either with her ſelf, or ſom other, of whoſe Vertu ſhe has reaſon to be confident.

43. But the moſt infallible Security againſt this and all other Miſchiefs, is the bringing them into an intimacy and converſation with their Maker, by fixing a true ſenſe of Religion in their Hearts; if that can be effectually don, 'twill ſuperſede all other Expedients. She that duly conſiders ſhe is always in Gods preſence, will want no other Inſpector, nor will ſhe much need Monitors, who attends to the advices of her own Conſcience. Neither will it only tend to the ſecuring her Innocence but her Reputation too; it being one part of the Chriſtian Law, *to abſtain from all appearance of evil*, 1 Theſſ. 2. 2. *to do things that are of good report*, Phil. 4. 8. ſo that Piety is the one compleat armo-

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to defend both their Vertu and Fame. And 'tis extremely neceſſary they ſhould be furniſht with it, at this Age eſpecially, when they do at firſt enter into the World; which we may well look on as a taking the Field, conſidering how many Aſſaults they are there like to meet with; and if they go without this Armature, they may, none knows how ſoon, be incurably wounded: of which there want not many ſad Inſtances, ſom whereof might probably have bin prevented, had the Parent taken care to have better fortified them.

44. And indeed 'tis not a little ſad to ſee how much this their moſt important Concern is neglected. Many Mothers, who are nicely curious in other parts of their Daughters breeding, are utterly inconſiderate in this. They muſt have all civil Accompliſhments, but no Chriſtian. Thoſe are excluded out of the ſcheme of Education, and by that means lie under the prejudice of being not only unneceſſary, but ungentile, below the regard of Perſons of Quality. 'Tis much to be fear'd, that this neglect toward their Children, is founded in a previous contemt of Piety in themſelves; yet I ſuppoſe 'tis often increaſ'd by a little Vanity they have of ſeeing them excel in ſome of thoſe exterior Qualities, which may recommend them to the humor of the World, upon the improving whereof they are ſo intent, that more material things are over-lookt. And when thoſe are acquired, the pride of ſhewing them betraies them to other Inconveniencies. The Mother oft not only permits, but incites the Daughter

to the opportunities of boasting her Excellencies, sends her so oft abroad on that Design, that at last perhaps she cannot, when she would, keep her at home, as I believe too many have found experimentally true. In a word, this Interval between Childhood and Majority, is the most critical Point of a Womans Life, and therefore should be the most nicely and warily attended; and a Mother had need summon not only all her care and diligence, but her prudence too, well to discharge this part of her Obligation.

45. I Shall not insist more minutely upon Particulars: I have in the former Section spoken somwhat of what 'tis fit these young Virgins should do and avoid; and whatever by that, or by any more exact rule appears their interest or duty, 'tis the Mothers to see it be not neglected by them: but where Kindness alone will not prevail, to employ their Autority too, and by a discreet mixture of each, secure their observance by both the tenures of Love and Reverence. Yet I shall a little reflect upon one Particular I mention'd before, I mean that of Marrying where they have aversion; which tho I there charg'd as the Crime of the Daughter, yet I must here say the original and more inexcusable guilt is usually in the Parents, who are sometimes such Idolaters to Wealth and Honor, that they Sacrifice their Children to them; a more barbarous Immolation then that to *Moloch*. For tho that were very inhuman, yet it had this alleviation, that the pain was short: but a loathed Bed is at once an acute

cute and a lingring Torment, nay, not only so, but a temtation too; so that 'tis a Tyranny of a most unlimited kind, extends its Effects even to Eternity: and sure that Mother must have very petrified Bowels, have lost all Natural Compassion, that can so impose on her Child.

46. I shall add no more concerning this relation of a Mother, but only one short Advice, That those who groan under the frustration of their hopes, whose Children by any scandalous misbehavior become the Objects of their shame and grief, would soberly consider, whether it have not bin som way owing to themselves, either by neglect in their Education, or by their own ill Example. 'Tis usually one, and sometimes both. They that upon recollection can assure themselves 'tis neither, may bear the Affliction with much the greater cheerfulness; but they that cannot, I am sure ought to bear it with much the more Patience and Submission, take it as Gods Lecture of Repentance, and look on their Childrens faults as the product of their own. And because Satisfaction is an indispensible part of Repentance, they are with their utmost industry to endeavor the repairing those Ruins they have made, by recalling those to Virtu, who by their means have strayed from it. 'Tis true, the errors of Education, like a subtil Poison, do so mix with the Blood, so incorporate into the Humors and Manners, that 'twill be very difficult to allay their Effects; and therefore the less they are themselves able to do towards it, the more earnestly they must

importune a Higher Power. He who divided the Light from the Darkneſs, can ſeparate the Effects from the Cauſes; and as he reſtrained the natural property of Fire, in the caſe of the three Children, *Dan.* 3. ſo He only can reſcu their Children from that deſtruction to which their negligence has expoſed them. But as to the influence their example has had, they may do ſomthing towards the redreſs of that, by ſetting them a new Copy, making their own change ſo viſible, ſo remarkable, that they may have the very ſame means of reclaiming, wch there was of ſeducing them. And this is a piece of Juſtice which ſeems to call aloud upon many Mothers. The irregularities of Youth could hardly have grown to the preſent height, had they not received warmth and ſhelter from the practice of their Elders, which do's at once give incouragement and take off reſtraints, the Mother looſing not only her Autority, but her confidence to admoniſh or reprove. With what face can ſhe require that ſtrict and ſevere modeſty of a young Girl, which ſhe who ſhould be a Matron will not practice? or tie up the giddy wandring humor of Youth, within thoſe bounds ſhe thinks too ſtrait for her own? and how ready a retortion will even Scripture it ſelf afford for ſuch an Impoſer? *Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thy ſelf? Rom.* 2. 21. Let it therefore be the care of all Mothers to live a perpetual Lecture to their Children, ſo to exemplifie to them all Virtu and Piety, that they may contribute ſomthing to their Spiritual, as well as their Natural Life; that how-

however they may at least deliver their own Souls, and not have their Childrens guilt recoil upon them as the unhappy originals of it.

27. The last relation of a Married Woman is that of a Mistress, the inspection of the Family being usually her Province; and tho she be not supreme there, yet she is to improve her delegated Autority to the advantage of all under it. And her more constant residence gives her more opportunities of it, then the frequent avocations of the Husband will perhaps allow him. St. *Paul* sets it as the Calling, and indispensible duty of the Married Woman, *That they guide the house*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 18. not thinking it a point of Greatness to remit the menage of all Domestic Concerns to a mercenary House-keeper. And indeed, since it has bin a fashionable thing for the Master to resign up his concerns to the Steward, and the Lady hers to the Governante, it has gon ill with most great Families; whilst these Officers serve themselves instead of those who employ them, raise Fortunes on their Patrons ruines, and divide the spoil of the Family; the House-keeper pilfering within doors, and the Bailiff plundering without.

48. Now to the well-guiding of the House by the Mistress of it, I know no better or more comprehensive rule, then for her to endeavor to make all that are hers, to be Gods Servants also. This will secure her of all those intermedial Qualifications in them, in which her secular Interest is concerned, their own Consciences being the best spy she can set

ſet upon them as to their Truth and Fidelity, and the beſt ſpur alſo to Diligence and Induſtry. But to the making them ſuch, there will need firſt Inſtruction, and ſecondly Diſcipline. It is a neceſſary part of the Rulers care to provide that none in their Family ſhould want means of neceſſary Inſtruction. I do not ſay that the Miſtreſs ſhould ſet up for a Catechiſt or Preacher; but that they take order they ſhould be taught by thoſe that are qualified for the Emploiment. And that their furniſhing them with Knowledg, may not ſerve only to help them to a greater number of ſtripes, *Luk.* 12.47. they are to give them the opportunities of conſecrating it by Praier and Devotion, to that end to have public Divine Offices in the Family; and that not by ſtarts or accidents (when a devouter Gueſt is to be entertained, and laid by when a profane) but daily and regularly, that the hours of Praiers may be fix'd and conſtant as thoſe of Meals, and (if it may poſſibly be) as much frequented; however that towards it ſhe give both Precept and Example.

49. A Chriſtian Family ſhould be the Epitome of a Church: but alas how many among us lie under a perpetual Interdict, and yet not from the uſurpation of any Foreign Power, but from the irreligion of the Domeſtic. One may go into divers great Families, and after ſome ſtay there, not be able to ſay that the name of God was mentioned to any other purpoſe then that of Blaſphemy and Execration; nor a Text of Scripture, unleſs in Burleſque and profane Drollery. And ſure we need not wonder at

at the universal complaint that is now made of ill servants, when we reflect upon this ill government of Families. They that are suffer'd wholly to forget their duties toward God, will not alwaies remember it towards Man. Servants are not such Philosophers that upon the bare strength of a few Moral Instincts they will be vertuous: and if by a customary neglect of all things Sacred, they are once taught to look at nothing beyond this World, they will often find temtation enough here to discard their honesty, as the most unthriving Trade. And indeed when the aw of Religion is quite taken off from the vulgar, there will scarce any thing else be found to keep them within any tolerable bounds; so that 'tis no less impolitic then profane to slacken that Rein.

50. But it is not only the Interest, but the Duty of all that have Families, to keep up the esteem and practice of Religion in them. 'Twas one of the greatest Endearments of *Abraham* to God, *That he would command his houshold to keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. 18. 19. And *Joshua* undertakes no less for the piety of his Houshold then himself, *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*, Jos. 24. 15. And sure 'tis but reasonable, that where we our selves ow an Homage, we should make all our dependants acknowledg the same. Besides, it is a justice in respect of them; for where we entertain a Servant, we take the whole Person into our care and protection, and are false ro that undertaking, if we suffer his Soul, the most precious part of him, to perish. And God, who keeps account even of his meanest

meaneſt Creatures, will not patiently reſent ſuch a neglect of thoſe who bear his own Image, and were ranſomed with as great a price as their Maſters were, *for there is no reſpect of perſons with God*, Eph. 6. 9.

51. But when Piety is planted in a Family, 'twill ſoon wither, if it be not kept in vigor by Diſcipline: nay, indeed to have Servants ſeemingly devout in the Oratory, and yet really licentious out of it, is but to convert ones Houſe into a Theater, have a play of Religion, and keep a ſet of Actors only to perſonate and repreſent it. 'Tis therefore neceſſary to inquire how they behave themſelves when they are off the Stage; whether thoſe hands which they elevate in Praier, are at other times induſtriouſly appli'd to work; or thoſe mouths wherewith they there bleſs God, are not elſewhere filled with Oaths and Curſes, Scurrilities and Revilings: in a word, whether that Form of Godlineſs be not deſign'd in commutation for Sobriety and Honeſty. Indeed the Governors of Families ought to make a ſtrict Inſpection into the manners of their Servants, and where they find them good to affix ſome ſpecial mark of Favor, by which they may both be encouraged to perſevere, and others to begin; but where they find them vicious, there as eminently to diſcountenance, ſeverely to admoniſh them, and uſe all fit means for their reclaiming, and when that ſeems hopeleſs, to diſmiſs them that they may not infect the reſt. A little *leven*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *leveneth the whole lump*, Gal. the

the 5. 9. and one ill servant (like a perisht tooth) wil be apt to corrupt his fellows. 'Tis therefore the same in families that it is in more public communities, where severity to the ill is mercy and protection to the rest; and were houses thus early weeded of all idle and vicious persons, they would not be so overgrown, nor degenerate into such rude wildernesses, as many (nay I fear most) great families now are.

52. But, as servants are not to be tolerated in the neglect of their duty, so neither are they to be defeated of any of their dues. Masters are to give to their servants that which is *just and equal*, Col. 4. 1. And sure 'tis but just and equall that they who are rational creatures should not be treated with the rigor or contemt of brutes: a sufficient and decent provision, both in sickness and in health is a just debt to them, besides an exact performance of those particular contracts upon which they were entertain'd. *Laban* had so much of natural justice, that he would not take the advantage of *Jacobs* relation to him to make him serve him gratis, *Because thou art my brother shouldst thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me therefore what shall thy wages be?* Gen. 29, 15. But alas now a daies where servants have bin told, nay expressly articled for, their wages, 'tis with many no easy thing to get it: nay 'tis thought by some Masters an insolence, a piece of ill manners to demand it; and when they have worn out a servant, they either pay him not at all, or with the same protraction and regret, which

they do their Tailors for the old Clothes they have cast off. I fear there are many instances of this, especially among great Persons, it being a received Mode with too many of them to pay no Debts to those who are too mean to contest with them. But however they may ruffle it out with Men, it will one day arraign them before God as most injurious Oppressors; there being no Crime of that kind more frequently or severely branded in Scripture, then this of the detention of the Wages of the Servant and Hireling. Besides, this example of Injustice, wherein the Servant is passive, is often transcrib'd by him in acts of fraud and deceit, and he is apt to think it but an equal retaliation, to break his Trust where the Master breaks his Covenant; and when he once attemts to be his own Pay-master, 'tis not to be doubted but he will allow himself large Use for the forbearance of his Wages; so that the course is no less unprofitable to the Master, then unjust and dishonorable.

53. I am not sure 'tis always in the Wives power to prevent this or any of the former faults in the menage of the Family. For her autority being but subordinate, if the Husband who is supreme suspend her Power, he do's by that vacating her rule, take off the duty consequent to it; so that what I have said, can be obligatory to none that are so impeded: but to those who can either do it themselves, or perswade their Husbands to it, the omission will be their sin: all the profaneness and disorder of the Family will be charg'd upon their account, if it came by their default. 54. And

54. And this, methinks, is a Consideration that may much mortifie one usual piece of vanity, I mean, that of a multitude of Servants. We shall all of us find burthen enough of our own personal miscarriages, and need not contrive to fetch in more weight from others. And in Families 'tis generally observable, That the bigger they are, the worse; vice gains boldness by numbers, is hatch'd up by the warmth of a full Society; and we daily see People venture upon those Enormities in consort and in a croud, which they would not dare, did they think they stood single. Besides, the wider the Province is, the more difficult it is well to administer it; and in a heap of servants many faults will scape undiscern'd, especially considering the common Confederacy there is usually among them, for the eluding of Discipline: so that what the Wise man speaks of not desiring a multitude of unprofitable Children, I think may be very well appli'd to Servants, whose unprofitableness usually increases together with their number. I have now run thro' the several Obligations consequent to the Married State, wherein even upon this very cursory View, there appears so many Particulars, that if they were all duly attended, Ladies need not be much at a loss how to entertain themselves, nor run abroad in a Romantic Quest after Foreign Divertisements, when they have such variety of Engagements at Home.

SECT. III.

Of Widows.

1. THE next ſtate which can ſucceed to that of Marriage, is Widowhood, which tho it ſuperſedes thoſe Duties which were terminated meerly in the perſon of the Husband, yet it endears thoſe which may be paid to his Aſhes. *Love is ſtrong as death*, Cant. 8. 6. and therefore when it is pure and genuine, cannot be extinguiſh'd by it, but burns like the Funeral-Lamps of old even in Vaults and Charnel-houſes. The conjugal Love tranſplanted into the Grave, (as into a finer Mold) improves into Piety, and laies a kind of ſacred Obligation upon the Widow, to perform all offices of reſpect and kindneſs which his Remains are capable of.

2. Now thoſe Remains are of three ſorts, his Body, his Memory, and his Children. The moſt proper expreſſion of her love to the firſt, is in giving it an honorable Enterment; I mean not ſuch as may vie with the *Poland* Extravagance (of which 'tis obſerved, that two or three near ſucceeding Funerals ruin the Family) but prudently proportion'd to his Quality and Fortune, ſo that her Zeal to his Corps may not injure a Nobler Relic of him, His Children. And this decency is a much better inſtance

ſtance of her kindneſs, then all thoſe Tragical Furies wherewith ſom Women ſeem tranſported towards their dead Husbands, thoſe frantic Embraces and careſſes of a Carcaſs, which betray a little too much the ſenſuality of their Love. And it is ſomthing obſervable, That thoſe vehement Paſſions quickly exhauſt themſelves, and by a kind of Sympathetic Efficacy, as the Body (on which their affection was fixt) molders, ſo does that alſo; nay often it attends not thoſe leſurely degrees of diſſolution, but by a more precipitate motion, ſeems rather to vaniſh then conſume.

3. The more valuable Kindneſs therefore, is that to his Memory, endevoring to embalm that, keep it from periſhing, and by this innocent Magic (as the Egyptians were wont by a more guilty) ſhe may converſe with the Dead, repreſent him ſo to her own Thoughts, that his Life may ſtill be repeated to her: and as in a broken Mirror the refraction multiplies the Images, ſo by his diſſolution every hour preſents diſtinct Idea's of him; ſo that ſhe ſees him the oftner, for his being hid from her Eies. But as they uſe not to Embalm without Odors, ſo ſhe is not only to preſerve but perfume his Memory, render it as fragrant as ſhe can, not only to her ſelf, but others; by reviving the remembrance of whatever was Praiſe-worthy in him, vindicating him from all Calumnies and falſe Accuſations, and ſtifling (or allaying) even True Ones as much as ſhe can. And indeed, a Widow can no way better provide for her own Honor, then by this tenderneſs of her Husbands.

4. Yet

4. Yet there is another Expression of it, inferior to none of the former, and that is, the setting such a valu upon her relation to him, as to do nothing unworthy of it. 'Twas the dying charge of *Augustus* to his Wife *Livia*, *Behave thy self well, and remember our Marriage.* And she who has bin Wife to a Person of Honor, must so remember it, as not to do any thing below her self, or which he (could he have foreseen it) should justly have bin ashamed of.

5. The last Tribute she can pay him, is in his Children. These he leaves as his Proxies to receive the kindness of which himself is uncapable; so that the Children of a Widow may claim a double portion of the Mothers love; one upon their Native right, as hers; the other, as a bequest in right of their dead Father. And indeed, since she is to supply the place of both Parents, 'tis but necessary she should put on the Affections of both, and to the tenderness of a Mother, add the care and conduct of a Father. First, in a sedulous care of their Education. And next, in the prudent managery of their Fortunes; an order that is sometimes unhappily inverted, and Mothers are so concern'd to have the Estate prosper in their tuition, that the Children cannot; whilst (by an unseasonable Frugality) to save a little Expence, they deny them the advantages of an Ingenious and Gentile Breeding, swell their Estates perhaps to a vast Bulk, but so contract and narrow their Minds, that they know not how to dispose them to any real benefit of themselves

or

or others. And this is one of the most pernicious Parsimonies imaginable. A Mother by this seems to adopt the Fortune, and abdicate the Child, who is only made the Beast to bear those loads of Wealth she will lay on, and which she evidently owns as the greatest Treasure, since in tenderness to that she neglects him.

6. Yet sometimes the same Effect springs from another Cause, and Children are ill bred, not because the Mother grudges the charge, but out of a Feminine fondness, which permits her not to part with them to the proper places for their education. Like *Jacob* to *Benjamin*, her Soul is so bound up in them, that she cannot lend them awhile even to their own most necessary concerns. And this, tho not so ignoble a motive as the other, is of no less mischief, at least to her Sons, who being by it confin'd to home, are consequently condemn'd to be poyson'd (if with nothing else, yet) with the flatteries of Servants and Tenants, who think those the best expedient to secure their own station. And with these the young Master or Landlord is so blown up, that as if his Manors were the confines of the World, he can look at nothing beyond them; so that when at last he breaks loose from his Mothers arms, and comes abroad, he expects scarce to find his Equals, much less his Betters, thinks he is still to receive the same fawning Adorations which he was used to at home: and being possest with this insolent expectation, he will scarce be undeceived, but at the price of many Affronts, nay, perhaps he

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may buy his experience with the loſs of his life; by his ill maners draw on a Quarrel, wherein he finally periſhes. That this is no impoſſible Suppoſition, ſom unhappy Mothers have found to their unſpeakable affliction.

7. 'Tis not to be denied, but there are alſo dangers conſequent to the breeding Children abroad, Vice having inſinuated it ſelf even into the places of Erudition, and having not only as many, but the very ſame Academies with Vertu and Learning; ſo that the extreme depravation of the times new ſtates the Queſtion, and we are not to conſider which is beſt, but which is the leaſt ill diſpoſure of Children. And in that competition ſure the home Education will be caſt; for there they may ſuck in all the Venom, and nothing of the Antidote; they will not only be taught baſe things, but (as I before obſerv'd) by the baſeſt Tutors, ſuch as will add all the moſt ſordid circumſtances to the improving of a Crime. Whereas abroad they are firſt not like to meet with any whoſe intereſt it ſo much to make them Vicious. And ſecondly, they may (as ill as the world is) meet with many who may give them both Precepts and Examples of a better kind. Beſides the Diſcipline uſed in thoſe Communities makes them know themſelves, and the various ſorts of Learning they may acquire, will not only prove uſeful divertiſement (the want of which is the great ſpring of miſchief) but will, if rightly apply'd, furniſh them with Ingenious and Vertuous Principles, ſuch as may ſet them above all vile and

ignoble

ignoble practices. So that there seems a conspiration of motives to wrest the child from the reluctant Mother, and to perswade her for a while to deny her self that desire of her eies, that so he may at last answer the more rational desire of her heart.

8. As to the other part of her Obligation, the managing of their Fortune, there is the same rule for her as for all other persons that have a Trust, viz. to do as for themselves; that is, with the same care and diligence (if not a greater) as in her own peculiar Concern. I do not say that she shall confound the property, and make it indeed her own, by applying it to her particular use: a thing I fear which is too often don, especially by the gaier sort of widows, who to keep up their own Equipage, do sometimes incroach upon their sons peculiar. And I wish even that (tho bad enough) were the only case wherein it were don: but 'tis sometimes to make her a better prize to a second husband. She goes into another family, and as if she were a Colony sent out by her son, he must pay for the planting her there: indeed the oft repeating this injury, has advanc't it now into a custom, and the management of the Minors estate is reckon'd on as part of the widows fortune. But I confess I see not what there is in the title of a Mother, that can legitimate her defrauding her child; it rather envenoms the crime and adds Unnaturalness to Deceit. Besides 'tis a prepostorous sort of guilt. Orphans and Widows are in scripture link'd together as objects of Gods and good mens pitty, and of ill

mens oppression, and how ill alas do's civil war look among fellow sufferers? The Widow to injure the Orphan is like that uncooth oppression *Solomon* speaks of, *Prov.* 28. 3. *A poor man that oppresseth the poor, is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.* Such kind of rapines are as excessive in their degree, as prodigious in their kind: and I believe there are many instances of sons, who have suffer'd more by the Guardianship of their Mothers, then they could probably have don by the outrage of strangers.

9. How well such Mothers answer their Obligations to their dead Husbands, I must leave it to their own Consciences to discuss, I shall only offer them these steps of gradation by which to proceed. First that Injustice of any sort is a great sin, secondly that when 'tis in a matter of trust 'tis complicated with Treachery also, thirdly that of all trusts those to the dead have allwaies bin esteem'd the most sacred: if they can find any allay to these by the two remaining circumstances, that 'tis the trust of a husband, and the interest of a child, I shall confess them very subtil Casuists.

10. I have hitherto spoke of what the widow ows to her dead husband, but there is also somwhat of peculiar Obligation in relation to her self. God who has plac'd us in this World to pursue the interests of a better, directs all the signal acts of his Providence to that end, and intends we should so interpret them. So that every great change that occurs, is design'd either to recal us from a wrong way, or to quicken our pace in the right; and a

widow

widow may more then conjecture, that when God takes away the mate of her bosom, reduces her to a solitude, he do's by it sound a retreat from the lighter jollities and gaieties of the world. And as in compliance with civil custom she immures her self, sits in darkness for a while; so she should put on a more retir'd temper of mind, a more strict and severe behavior, and that not to be cast off with her veil, but to be the constant dress of her widowhood. Indeed that State as it requires a great sobriety and piety, so it affords many advantages towards it. The Apostle tell us, *that she who is married careth for the things of the World, how she may please her husband*, 1. Cor. 7. 34. There are many things which are but the due compliances of a Wife, which yet are great avocations, and interrupters of a strict Devotion; when she is manumitted from that subjection, when she has less of *Martha's care of serving*, she is then at liberty to chose *Mary's part*, Luk. 10. 42. She has her time and her fortune at her own command, and consequently may much more abound in the works both of Piety and Charity. We find God himself retrencht the wives power of binding her own soul *Num.* 30. Her vows were totally insignificant without her husbands confirmation; but the widow might devote her self to what degree she pleas'd, her piety has no restraint from any other inconsistent obligation, but may swell as high as it can. Those hours which were before her husbands right, seem now to devolve on God the grand proprietor

of our time: that discourse and free converse where-with she entertain'd him, she may now convert into colloquies and spiritual entercourse with her maker; and that love which was only human before, by the change of its object acquires a sublimity, is exalted into divine, from loial duty and conjugal affection becomes the eternal work and happiness of Angels, the ardor of a Cherubim. Thus may she in a higher sense verify *Samsons* riddle *Jud.* 14. 14. *fetch hony out of a carcasse*, make her husbands Ashes (like those of the heifer under the law *Heb.* 9. 13.) *her Purification*: his corruption may help to put on incorruption, and her losse of a temporary consort may instate her in an eternal.

11. And as her self, so her fortune may also be consecrated: And indeed if she be, that will also: If she have made an escape out of *Ægypt*, there shall not a hoof be left behind her, *Exod.* 10. 26. no part of her possessions will be assign'd to vanity and excess. She who hath really devoted her self to Piety, *fasted and praied* with *Anna* Luk. 2. 37. will also be *full of good works and alms-deeds* with *Tabitha*, Act. 9. 36. Thus she may be a mother when she ceases to bear; and tho she no more increase one family, she may support many: And certainly the fertility of the womb, is not so valuable as this of the bowels: Fruitfulness can be but a happiness, Compassion is a vertu. Nay indeed 'tis a greater and more certain happiness: a child is not brought forth but with pangs & anguish

anguish, but a work of Mercy is produc'd not only with ease, but delight. Besides, she that bears a Child, knows not whether it may prove a Blessing or a Curse; but Charity gives certain title to a Blessing, and engages the most solvent Paymaster, even God himself, who owns all such disbursments as a loan to him. *He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord: and that which he hath given, will he pay him again*, Prov. 19. 17.

12. There was in the Primitive Times an Ecclesiastical Order of Widows, which St. *Paul* mentions, 1 *Tim.* 5. whose whole Ministry was devoted to Charity. They were indeed of the poorer sort, fit rather to receive then give Alms; yet the less they could do with their Purses, the more was required of their Persons, the humbler offices of *washing the Saints feet*, the careful task of *bringing up children*, and a diligent *attendance on every good work*. And sure there is parity of Reason, that those who upon the score of their Wealth, exemt themselves from those Laborious Services, should commute for it by more Liberal Alms. In the warmth and zeal of Christianity, Women of the highest Quality performed both sorts of Charity, forgot their Greatness in their condescensions, yet assum'd it again in their Bounty; founded Hospitals, and yet with a *labor of love*, as the Apostle stiles it, *Heb.* 6. 10. disdain'd not sometimes to serve in them. But these are Examples not like to be transcrib'd in our daies, Greatness is now grown to such an unweildiness that it cannot stoop

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tho to the most Christian Offices, and yet can as little soar up in any Munificent Charities: it stands like *Nebuchadnezzars* Golden Image, a vast Bulk only to be ador'd.

I. Now certainly, if any Women be qualified to avert this reproch, it must be the Dowagers of great Families and Fortunes: they have none to controul their Visits to the sick and afflicted, or to resent a disparagement from their Humility, neither have they an account to give of their Possessions to any but God and themselves; to him sure they can bring none so like to procure them the Eulogy of *well don thou good and faithful servant*, Matth. 25. 21. as a Catalogue of their Alms. Nor infibly can they any other way dispose their Fortune so much to their own contentment; they may poscdeed cloy and satiate their senses, make provision for the flesh; but that no way satisfies their reason, much less their Conscience. The Soul, which is the superior part, is quite left out in that distribution; nothing is communicated to it but the guilt of those dear bought Excesses. The only way it has to be a sharer in their Wealth, is by a charitable dispensing. The Poor are its Proxies as well as Gods, and tho in all other respects we may say to the Soul, as the *Psalmist* do's to God, *Psal.* 16. 2. *my goods extend not to thee*; yet by this way, it becomes not only a partaker, but the chief proprietor, and all is laid out for its use. The harboring an out-cast, builds it *an everlasting habitation*, Luk. 16. 9. the clothing the naked, arrays it in *pure*

white

white linen, Rev. 19.8. and the feeding the hungry makes it a guest *at the supper of the Lamb*, v. 8. Nay it gains not only an indefeasible title to these happy Reversions, but it has a great deal in present possession, a huge rational Complacence in the right applying of Wealth, & doing that with it for which 'twas design'd; yet more, it gives a sensitive delight, nothing being more agreeable to human nature, then the doing good to its own kind. A seasonable Alms leaves a greater exultation and transport in the Giver, then it can ordinarily raise in the Receiver, so exemplifying the Maxim of our Blessed Lord, that it is a *more blessed thing to give then to receive*, Act. 20.35. This indeed is a way to elude the severe denunciation of the Apostle, 1 *Tim.* 5.6. *He that liveth in thus pleasure, is not dead whilest he liveth*; but on the contrary, shall live when she dies; when she resigns her Breath, shall improve her being: the Praiers of the Poor, like a benign gale, shall assist her flight to the Region of Bliss, and she who has here cherish'd the afflicted Members, shall there be indissolubly united to their Glorious Head.

14. And now methinks Widow-hood, under this aspect, is quite transform'd, is not so forlorn, so desolate an estate as 'tis usually esteem'd. And would all Widows use but this expedient, thus devote themselves to Piety and Charity, it would, like the healing Tree, *Exod.* 15. 25. sweeten those Waters of *Marah*, render the condition not only supportable, but pleasant, and they would not need to make such affrighted, such disadvantageous

escapes,

escapes, as many do, from it. 'Tis true, the Apostles affirmation is unquestionable, that *the wife, when her husband is dead, is at liberty to be married to whom she will*, 1 Cor. 7. 39. But the advice he subjoins is authentic too, *she is happier if she so abide*. She that may solace her self in the Society, in the Love of her God, makes an ignoble descent to Human Embraces, she that may purchase Heaven with her Wealth, buys a very dear Bargain of the best Husband on Earth. Nay indeed, upon a meer secular account, it seems not very prudent to relinquish both Liberty and Property, to espouse at the best a Subjection, but perhaps a Slavery: it a little resembles the mad Frolicks of freed Gally-slaves, who play away their Liberty as soon as they regain it.

15. Marriage is so great an adventure, that once seems enough for the whole life: for whether they have bin prosperous or adverse in the first, it do's almost discourage a second attempt. She that has had a good Husband, may be suppos'd to have his Idea so fixt in her Heart, that it will be hard to introduce any new Form: nay farther, she may very reasonably doubt, that in this common dearth of Vertu, two good Husbands will scarce fall to one Womans share, and an ill one will become more intolerable to her, by the reflections she will be apt to make on the better. On the other side, if she have had a bad, the smart sure cannot but remain after the rod is taken off, the memory of what she has suffer'd should, methinks, be a competent caution

caution againſt new adventures. Yet experience ſhews us that women (tho the weaker ſex) have commonly fortitude enough to encounter and baffle all theſe conſiderations. It is not therefore to be expected that many will by any thing that hath or can be ſaid be diverted from remarrying: and indeed ſhe that does not preſerve her widowhood upon the accounts forementioned, may perhaps better relinquiſh it. St *Paul* we ſee adviſes that thoſe *Widows* who found no better employment *then going from houſe to houſe*, that grew by their vacancy to *be tatlers and buſy bodies* 1. Tim. 5. 13. ſhould marry again; it being the beſt way to fix theſe wandring planets, to find them buſineſs of their own at home, that ſo they may not ramble abroad to intermedle with that of others. And the truth is they that cannot brook the retiredneſs and gravity which becomes a Widow, had better put themſelves in a ſtate that leſs requires it; and if they reſolve not to conform their minds to their condition, to bring their condition to their minds; but in the doing that there will be ſom cautions very neceſſary to be obſerv'd. I ſhall reduce them to two, the one relating to the time, the other to the equality of the match.

16. FIRST in reſpect of time, common decency requires that there be a conſiderable intervall between the parting with one husband and the chooſing another. This has bin ſo much obſerved by nations that were at all civiliz'd, that

we find *Numa* made it a law, that no widow ſhould marry under 10. months, and if any did ſhe was to ſacrifice as for the expiation of a crime. And this continued in force many ages after, inſomuch that when upon reaſons of State *Auguſtus* found it uſefull to marry his ſiſter *Octavia* to *Antonius*, nothing leſs then a decree of the Senate could licenſe the anticipating the time; ſo jealous obſervers were they of this point of Civility, that they thought the whole State was concern'd in the violation. 'Tis true we have no law in the caſe, but we have ſomwhat of cuſtom, I know not how long we ſhall have, ſince the frequent breaches of it threaten quite to cancel it: yet a woman that is tender of her honor will ſcarce give her example towards the reſcinding it. The wounds of grief are ſeldom heal'd by any hand but that of time, and therefore too ſudden a cure ſhews the hurt pierc'd not deep; and ſhe that can make her mourning veil an optic to draw a new lover neerer to her ſight, gives cauſe to ſuſpect the ſables were all without.

17. The next thing conſiderable is the equality of the match. Marriage is ſo cloſe a link, that to have it eaſy 'tis good to have the parties as even proportion'd as may be. And firſt in reſpect of quality and fortune, 'tis to be wiſht there ſhould be no eminent diſproportion. Thoſe that meet moſt upon a level, are leaſt ſubject to thoſe upbraidings that often attend a great deſcent of either party. *It* is therefore no prudent motive,

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by which some Widows are swai'd, who marry only for a great Title; who often do not meet with so much of obeisance from strangers, as they do with contemt from their husbands and his relations. There have bin many examples of Lords, who have used rich, but inferior, widows like spunges, squeez'd them to fill themselves with their wealth, and them only with the air of a big name. On the other side for a woman to marry very meanly and too much below her self, is rather worse; those kind of matches are ordinarily made in a transport of passion, and when that abates and leaves her to sober reflections, she will probably be so angry with her self, that she will scarce be well pleas'd with her husband. A state of subjection is a little sweetned by the worth and dignity of the ruler: for as it is more honorable, so 'tis also more easy, the serviler spirits being of all others the most imperious in command. And sure 'twill not a little grate a woman of honor, to think she has made such a one her Master, who perhaps would before have thought it a preferment to have bin her servant. Nay farther, such marriages have commonly an ill reflection on the modesty of the Woman, it being usually presum'd that where the distance was so great, as to discourage such an attemt on his part, there was some invitation on hers. So that upon all accounts she is very forlorn who thus disposes of her self. Yet 'tis too well known such matches have oft bin made, and the same levity and inconsideration may betray others to

it; and therefore 'tis their concern well to ballast their minds and to provide that their Passion never get the ascendant over their Reason.

18. Another very necessary equality is that of their judgement as to Religion. I do not mean that they are to catechize each other as to every minute speculative point; but that they be of the same profession, so as to join together in the worship of God. It is sure very uncomfortable that those who have so closely combin'd all their other interests, should be disunited in the greatest; that one Church cannot hold them, whom one house, one bed does; and that religion which is in it self the most uniting thing, should be the only disagreement between them. I know 'tis oft made a compact in such matches, that neither shall impose their opinion upon the other: yet I doubt 'tis seldom kept, unless it be by those whose carelesness of all religion abates their zeal to any one. But where they have any earnestness in their way, especially where one party thinks the other in a damnable error, twill scarce be possible to refrain endeavoring to reduce them; and that endeavor begets disputes, those disputes heats, those heats disgusts, and those disgusts perhaps end in aversion; so that at last their affections grow as unreconcilable as their opinions, and their religious jars draw on domestic. Besides if none of these personal debates happen, yet the education of the children will be matter of dispute; the one parent will still be countermining the other, each seeking

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to recover the others proselytes. Nay it introduces faction into the inferior parts of the family too: the servans according to their different perswasions bandy into leagues and parties; so that it endangers, if not utterly destroies all concord in families: and all this train of mischiefs should methinks be a competent prejudice against such matches.

19. THERE is yet a third particular wherin any great disproportion is much to be avoided, and that is in Years. The humors of youth and age differ so widely, that there had need be a great deal of skill to compose the discord into a harmony. When a young Woman marries an old man, there are commonly jealousies on the one part and loathings on the other, and if there be not an eminent degree of discretion in one or both, there will be perpetual disagreements. But this is a case that does not often happen among those I now speak to: for tho the avarice of Parents sometimes forces maids upon such matches, yet Widows who are their own choosers seldom make such elections. The inequality among them commonly falls on the other side, and old women marry young men. Indeed any marriage is in such a folly and dotage. They who must suddenly make their beds in the dust, what should they think of a nuptiall couch? And to such the answer of the Philosopher is apposite, who being demanded what was the fittest time for marrying, replied, for the young not yet, for the old not at all.

20. BUT

20. BUT this dotage becomes perfect frenzy and madness when they choose young husbands: this is an accumulation of absurdities and contradictions. The husband and the Wife are but one person; and yet at once young and old, fresh and wither'd. 'Tis a reversing the decrees of nature: and therefore 'twas no ill answer which *Dionysius* the Tyrant gave his mother, who in her age design'd such a match, That tho by his regal power he could dispence with positive laws, yet he could not abrogate those of nature, or make it fit for her an old woman to marry a young man. 'Tis indeed an inversion of seasons, a confounding the Kalendar, making a mungrel month of *May* and *December*: and the conjunction proves as fatal as it is prodigious; it being scarce ever seen that such a match proves tolerably happy. And indeed 'tis not imaginable how it should; for first tis to be presum'd she that marries so must marry meanly, no young man who does not need her fortune will take her person. For tho som have the humor to give great rates for inanimate antiquities, yet none will take the living gratis. Next she never misses to be hated by him she marries: he looks on her as his rack and torment, thinks himself under the lingring torture devis'd by *Mezentius*, a living body tied to a dead. Nor must she think to cure this by any the little adulteries of art: she may buy beauty, and yet can never make it her own; may paint, yet never be fair. 'Tis like enameling a mud wall, the coursness of the ground will

will spoil the varnish; and the greatest exquisitness of dress serves but to illustrate her native blemishes. So that all she gains by this is to make him scorn as well as abhor her.

21. INDEED there is nothing can be more ridiculous, then an old Woman gaily set out; and it was not unaptly said of *Diogenes* to such a one, If this decking be for the living, you are deceived; if for the dead, make hast to them: and I doubt many young husbands will be ready to say as much. Nay because death comes not quick enough to part them, there is few have patience to attend its loitering pace: the man bids adieu to the Wife tho not to her fortune, takes that to maintain his luxuries else where, allows her some little annuity, and makes her a pensioner to her own estate. So that he has his design, but she none of hers: he married for her fortune, and he has it; she for his person, and has it not: and which is worse buies her defeat with the loss of all, he commonly leaving her as emty of mony as he found her of wit.

22. AND truly this is a condition deplorable enough, and yet usually fails even of that comfort which is the last reserve of the miserable, I mean Pitty. 'Tis the Wise man's question, *Eccles.* 12. 13. *Who will pitty a charmer that is bitten with a Serpent?* He might have presum'd less on his skill, and kept himself at a safer distance: and sure the like may be said of her. Alas what are her feeble charms, that she should expect by them to fix the giddy

giddy appetites of youth? And since she could so presume without sense, none will regret that she should be convinc'd by smart. Besides, this is a case wherein there have bin a multitude of unhappy Presidents which might have caution'd her. He that accidentally falls down an undiscoverd precipice is compassionated for his disaster; but he that stands a great while on the brink of it, looks down and sees the bottom strew'd with the mangled carcasses of many that have thence fallen; if he shall deliberately cast himself into their company, the blame quite extinguishes the pitty; he may astonish, but not melt the beholders. And truly she who casts her self away in such a match, betraies not less, but more wilfullness. How many ruins of unhappy women present themselves to her, like the wracks of old vessels, all split upon this rock? And if she will needs steer her course purposely to do the same, none ought to grudg her the shipwrack she so courts.

23. Nor has she only this negative discomfort to be depriv'd of pitty, but she is loaded with censures and reproch. The World is apt enough to malicious errors, to fix blame where there is none, but 'tis seldom guilty of the charitative, does not overlook the smallest appearance of evill, but generally puts the worst construction on any act, that it will with any probability bear; and according to that measure women in this condition can expect no very mild descants on them. Indeed such matches are so destitute of any rational

tional Plea, that 'tis hard to derive them from any other motive then the ſenſitive. What the common conjectures are in that caſe, is as needleſs as it is unhandſom to declare: I will not ſay how true they are, but if they be, it adds another reaſon to the former, why ſuch Marriages are ſo improſperous. All diſtortions in Nature are uſually ominous; and ſure ſuch preternatural heats in Age, may very well be reckon'd as diſmal Preſages, and very certain ones too, ſince they create the ruine they foretell. And truly 'tis not only juſt, but convenient, that ſuch Motives ſhould be attended with ſuch Conſequences; that the Bitterneſs of the one, may occaſion ſome reflexion on the Sordidneſs of the other. 'Tis but kindly, that ſuch an Alhallontide Spring ſhould meet with Froſts, and the unpleſantneſs of the Event chaſtiſe the uglineſs of the Deſign; and therefore I think thoſe that are conſcious of the one, ſhould be ſo far from murmuring, that they ſhould be very thankful for the other: think it Gods diſcipline to bring them again to their Wits, and not repine at that ſmart which themſelves have made neceſſary.

24. And now I wiſh all the Ancienter Widows, would ſeriouſly weigh how much 'tis their Intereſt not to ſever thoſe two Epithets; that of Ancient they cannot put off, it daily grows upon them; and that of Widow is ſure a more propertionable adjunct to it, then that of Wife; eſpecially when it is to one to whom her Age might have made her Mother. There is a Veneration due to Age, if it be

be such as disowns not it self: *The hoary head, says Solomon, is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness*, Prov. 16. 32. but when it will mix it self with Youth, it is disclaim'd by both, becomes the shame of the Old, and the scorn of the Young. What a strange fury is it then which possesses such Women, that when they may dispose their Fortunes to those Advantageous Designs before mention'd, they should only buy with them, so undecent, so ridiculous a slavery? that when they may keep up the reputation of Modesty and Prudence, they should expose themselves to an Universal Contemt for the want of both; and that they who might have had a Reverence, put themselves even out of the capacity of bare Compassion.

25. This is so high a Frenzy, as sure cannot happen in an instant; it must have some preparatory degrees, some rooting in the constitution and habit of the mind: Such Widows have sure some lightness of humor, before they can be so giddy in their Brains, and therefore these that will secure themselves from the Effect, must substract the Cause; if they will still be wishing themselves young, 'tis odds but within a while they will persuade themselves they are so. Let them therefore content themselves to be old, and as Fashions are varied with Times, so let them put on the Ornaments proper to their Season; which are Piety, Gravity, and Prudence. These will be not only their Ornament, but their Armor too; this will gain them such a Reverence, that will make it as

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improbable they should be assaulted, as impossible they should assault. For I think one may safely say, It is the want of one or all of those, which betraies Women to such Marriages.

26. And indeed it may be a matter of Caution, even to the younger Widows, not to let themselves too much loose to a light frolic Humor, which perhaps they will not be able to put off, when it is most necessary they should. It will not much invite a sober Man to marry them while they are young; and if it continue with them till they are old, it may (as Natural Motions use) grow more violent toward its end: precipitate them into that ruinous Folly we have before consider'd. Yet, should they happen to scape that, should it not force them from their Widow-hood, it will sure very ill agree with it: for how preposterous is it for an Old Woman to delight in Gauds and Trifles, such as were fitter to entertain her Grand-children? to read Romances with spectacles, and be at Masks and Dancings, when she is fit only to act the Anties? These are contradictions to Nature, the tearing off her Marks, and where she has writ fifty or sixty, to lessen (beyond the proportion of the unjust Steward) and write sixteen. And those who thus manage their Widow-hood, have more reason to bewail it at last then at first, as having more experimentally found the mischief of being left to their own Guidance. It will therefore concern them all to put themselves under a safer Conduct, by an assiduous Devotion to render themselves up to the

leading of the one infallible Guide, who, if he be not a *covering of the eyes*, Gen. 20. 16. to preclude all second Choices, may yet be *a light to them* for discerning who are fit to be chosen; that if they see fit to use their liberty and Marry, they may yet take the Apostles restriction with it, 1 Cor. 7. 40. that *it be only in the Lord*. Upon such sober Motives, and with such due Circumstances as may approve it to Him, and render it capable of his Benediction.

The Close.

I. I HAVE now gone thro both Parts of the propos'd Method. The former has presented those Qualifications which are equally necessary to every Woman: These, as a Root, send sap and vigour to the distinct Branches, animate and impregnate the several successive States thro which she is to pass. He that hath pure Ore or Bullion, may cast it into what Form best fits his use, may may translate it from one to another; and she who has that Mine of Virtues, may furnish out any Condition; her being good in an absolute consideration, will certainly make her so in a relative. On the other side, she who has not such a Stock, cannot keep up the Honor of any State; like corrupted Liquor, emty it from one Vessel to another

another, it still infects and contaminates all. And this is the cause that Women are alike complain'd of under all Forms, because so many want this Fundamental Vertu: were there more good Women, there would be more modest Virgins, loyal and obedient Wives, and sober Widows.

2. I Must therefore intreat those who will look on this Tract, not only to single out that part which bears their own Inscription, but that they think themselves no less concern'd in that which relates indefinitely to their Sex; endeavor to possess themselves of those Excellencies, which should be as universal as their Kind: and when they are so stor'd with Matter, they may leave Providence to diversifie the Shape, and to assign them their Scene of Action.

3. And now, would God it were as easie to persuade, as it is to propose; and that this Discourse may not be taken only as a Gazet for its newness, and discarded as soon as read, but that it may at least advance to the honor of an Almanac, be allowed one Year ere it be out of date: and in that time, if frequently and seriously consulted, it may perhaps awaken som Ladies from their stupid Dreams, convince them that they were sent into the World for nobler purposes, then only to make a little Glittering in it; like a Comet, to give a blaze, and then disappear. And truly, if it may Operate but so far as to give them an effective sense of that, I shall think it has don them a considerable Service. They may, I am sure, from that Principle, deduce

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all neceſſary Conſequences, and I wiſh they would but take the pains to draw the Corollaries; for thoſe Inductions they make to themſelves, would be much more efficacious then thoſe which are drawn to their hands. Propriety is a great endearment, we love to be Proſelytes to our ſelves; and People oft reſiſt others Reaſons, who would upon meer partiality pay reverence to their own.

4. But beſides this, there would be another Advantage, if they could be but got to a cuſtom of conſidering, by it they might inſenſibly undermine the grand Inſtrument of their ruine. That careleſs incogitancy, ſo remarkably frequent among all, and not leaſt among Perſons of Quality, is the ſource of innumerable Miſchiefs; 'tis the *Delilah*, that at once lulls and betrays them; it keeps them in a perpetual Sleep, binds up their Faculties, ſo that, tho they are not extinct, yet they become uſeleſs. *Plato* uſed to ſay, *That a man a ſleep was good for nothing*: and 'tis certainly no leſs true of this Moral drouſineſs then the Natural. And as in Sleep the fancy only is in motion, ſo theſe inconſiderate Perſons, do rather dream then diſcourſe, entertain little trifling Images of things, which are preſented by their Senſes, but know not how to converſe with their Reaſon. So that in this drouſy ſtate, all temtations come on them with the ſame advantage, with that of a *thief in the night*; a Phraſe by which the Scripture expreſſes the moſt inevitable unforeſeen danger, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 2. We read in *Judges*, how eaſily *Laiſh* became a prey to a handful

ful of Men, meerly becauſe of this ſupine negligent humor of the Inhabitants, which had cut them off from all intercourſe with any who might have ſuccor'd them, *Jud.* 18. 27, 28. and certainly it gives no leſs opportunity to our Spiritual Aſſailants, leaves us naked and unguarded to receive all their Impreſſions. How prodigious a thing is it then, that this ſtate of dulneſs and danger ſhould be affectedly choſen? yet we ſee it too often is, even by thoſe whoſe Qualities & Education fit them for more Ingenious Elections; nay, which is yet more riddle, that very aptneſs diſenables, ſets them above what it prepares them for. Labor is lookt on as utterly incompatible with Greatneſs, and Conſideration is lookt on as a labor of the mind; and there are ſome Ladies, who ſeem to reckon it as their Prerogative, to be exemted from both; will no more apply their Underſtandings to any ſerious Diſcuſſion, then their Hands to the Spindle and Diſtaff; the one they think pedantic, as the other is mean. In the mean time, by what ſtrange meaſures do they proceed? they look on Idiots as the moſt deplorable of Creatures, becauſe they want reaſon, and yet make it their own excellence and preheminence, to want the uſe of it; which is indeed ſo much worſe then to want the thing, as ſloth is worſe then poverty, a moral defect then a natural. But we may ſee by this, how much civil and ſacred Eſtimates differ: for we find the *Bereans* commended, not only as more diligent, but as more noble too, *Acts* 17. 11. becauſe they attentively *conſider'd*

d:r'd, and ſtrictly examin'd the *Doctrine preach'd to them.* By which they may diſcern, that in Gods Court of Honor, a ſtupid Oſcitancy is no ennobling Quality, however it comes to be thought ſo in theirs.

5. And if this one point might be gain'd, if they would but ſo far actuate their Reaſon, as deliberately and duly to weigh their Intereſt, they would find that ſo ſtrictly engaging them to all that is Vertuous; that they muſt have a very invincible reſolution for ruine, if that cannot perſwade them: and I hope all women are not Medea's, whom the Poet brings in avowing the horridneſs of that fact, which yet ſhe reſolv'd to execute. They are generally rather timorous, and apt to ſtart at the apprehenſion of danger; let them but ſee a ſerpent tho at a great diſtance, they will need no homilies or lectures to be perſwaded to fly it. And ſure did they but clearly diſcern what a ſting there is in thoſe vicious follies they embrace, their fear would make them quit their hold; put them in ſuch a trembling, as would like that of Belſhazzars, ſlacken their joints, and make thoſe things drop from them, which before they moſt tenaciouſly graſped. For indeed in ſin there is a conſpiration of all that can be dreadful to a rational being, ſo that one may give its compendium by the very reverſe of that which the Apoſtle gives of Godlineſs. 1. Tim. 4. 8. for as the one *has the promiſes*, ſo the other has the curſes *of this life, and of that to come.* 6. It

6. In this life every deprav'd act (much more habit) has a black shadow attending it; it casts one inward upon the conscience in uncomfortable upbraidings and regrets. 'Tis true indeed some have the art to disguise that to themselves by casting a yet darker over it; suppressing all those reluctings by an industrious stupefaction; making their souls so perfect night, that they cannot see those black images their Consciences represent. But as this renders their condition but the more wretched; so neither can they blind others tho they do themselves. Vice casts a dark shadow outwards too, not such as may conceal but betray its self: and as the evening shadows increase in dimension, grow to a monstrosity and disproportion; so the longer any ill habit is continued, the more visible, the more deform'd it appears; draws more observation and more censure.

7. Twere indeed endless to reckon up the temporal evils to which it exposes its votaries; Immodesty destroi's their fame, a vain Prodigality their fortune, Anger makes them mad, Pride hateful, Levity renders them despis'd, Obstinacy desperate, and Irreligion is a complication of all these, fills up their mesure both of guilt and wretchedness. So that had vertu no other advocate, her very Antagonist would plead for her: the miserable consequences of vice, would like the flames of *Sodom* send all considering persons to that little Zoar, which how despicable soever it may have appear'd before, cannot but look

invitingly when safety is inscrib'd on its gates.

8. BUT it must infinitly more do so if they please to open a visto into the other World, make use of divine perspectives to discern those distant objects which their grosser senses do here intercept. There they may see the dismal Catastrophe of their Comedies, the miserable inversion of all unlawful or unbounded pleasures: there that Prophetic menace concerning *Babylon* which we find *Rev.* 18. 7. will be literally verified upon every unhappy soul, *According as she exalted her self and lived delicately, so much the more tribulation give her*; the torment of that life will bear proportion to the pride and luxuries of this. It will therefore be necessary for those who here wallow in pleasures, to confront to them the remembrance of those rivers of Brimstone, and ask themselves the prophets question, *who can dwell with everlasting burnings?* We find *Esay*, when he denounces but temporal judgments against the daughters of *Zion*, he exactly pursues the Antithesis, and to every part of their effeminate delicacy he opposes the direct contrary hardship, instead of *sweet smels there shall be a stink*, *instead of a girdle a rent*, *instead of well set hair baldness*, *instead of a stomacher a girding with sackcloth*, *and burning instead of beauty* Esay 3. 24.

9. IT were well the daughters of our *Zion* would copy out this lecture, and prudently forsee how every particular sin or vanity of theirs will have its adapted punishment in another World. And

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ſure this conſideration well digeſted, muſt needs be a forcible expedient to cleanſe them from all *filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks 2 Cor. 7. 1. For is it poſſible for her to cheriſh and blow up her libidinous flames here, who conſiders them but as the firſt kindlings of thoſe inextinguiſhable ones hereafter? Can ſhe make it her ſtudy to pleaſe her appetite, that remembers that Dives's unintermitted feaſt ends in as unallaied a thirſt? Or can ſhe deny the crumbs of her table to that *Lazarus*, to whom ſhe forſees ſhe ſhall then ſupplicate for a drop of water? In fine can ſhe lay out her whole induſtry, her fortune, nay her ingenuity too, in making proviſion for the fleſh, who conſiders that that fleſh will more corrupt by pampering, and breed the worm that never dies? Certainly no woman can be ſo deſperately daring, as thus to attaque damnation, reſiſt her reaſon and her ſenſe, only that ſhe may ruin her ſoul; and unleſs ſhe can do all this, her foreſight will prove her eſcape, and her viewing the bottomleſs pit in Landskip and picture will ſecure her from a reall deſcent into it.

10. But now that this Tract may not make its exit in the ſhape of a Fury, bring the meditations to hell and there leave them, it muſt now at laſt ſhift the Scene, and as it has ſhew'd the blackneſs of vice by that outer darkneſs to which it leads, we alſo will let in a beam of the Celeſtial light to diſcover the beauty of Vertu; remind the Reader that there is a region of joy as well as a

place of torment, and Piety and Vertu *is that* milky way that leads to it; a ſtate, compar'd to which the Elyſium of the heathen is as inconſiderable as it is fictitious, the Mahometan Paradiſe as flat and inſipid as it is groſs and brutiſh; where the undertaking of the Pſalmiſt ſhall be compleatly anſwer'd, thoſe *that fear the Lord ſhall want no manner of thing that is good*, Pſalm. 34. 10. And this happy ſtate is as acceſſible as excellent. God is not unſincere in his propoſals, offers not theſe glories only to Tantalize and abuſe us, but to animate and incourage mankind. He ſets up an inviting prize, and he not only marks out, but levels the way to it; makes that our duty which is alſo our pleſure, yea and our honor too. So has he contriv'd for our eaſe, that knowing how hardly we can diveſt our voluptuouſneſs and ambition, he puts us not to it; all he demands is but that he may chooſe the objects, and in that he is yet more obliging, for by that at once he refines and ſatisfies the deſires. He takes us off indeed from the fulſom pleſures of ſenſe, which by their groſſneſs may cloy, yet by reaſon of their emtineſs can never fill us; and brings us to taſt the more pure ſpiritual delights which are the true elixir of Pleſures, in compariſon whereof all the ſenſual are but as the dregs or feces in an extraction, after the ſpirits are drawn off. In like manner he calls us from our aſpiring to thoſe pinnacles of honor, where we alwaies ſit totteringly and often fall down, but yet invites us

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to ſoar higher, where we ſhall have the *moon* with all her viciſſitudes and changes *under our feet* Rev. 12. 1. and enjoy a grandeur as irreverſible as ſplendid.

11. THUS do's he ſhew us a way to hallow our moſt unſanctified affections; thus, according to the Propheſie of *Zechariah*, *may holineſs be writ even upon the bells of the horſes*, *Zec.* 14. 20. upon our moſt brutal inclinations; and thus may all thoſe feminine Paſſions which now ſeduce women from Vertu, advance them in it. Let her that is amorous, place her love upon him who is (as the Spouſe tells us, *Cant*, 5. 10.) *the chiefeſt among ten thouſand*; ſhe that is angry, turn her edg againſt her ſins; ſhe that is haughty, diſdain the Devils drudgery; ſhe that is fearful, dread him who *can deſtroy both Body and Soul in Hell*, *Matt.* 5. 28. and ſhe that is ſad, reſerve her tears for her penitential offices. Thus may they conſecrate even their infirmities; and tho they cannot Deifie, or erect Temples to them, as the Romans did to their Paſſions, nay their Diſeaſes; yet after they are thus cleanſed, they may ſacrifice them as the Jews did the clean Beaſts in the Tabernacle. Only Irreligion and Profaneneſs is exemt from this Priviledg, no water of Purification can cleanſe it, or make it ſerviceable in the Temple; that, like the ſpoils of *Jericho*, is ſo execrable, that it muſt be devoted to deſtruction, as *an accurſed thing*, Joſ. 6. 17. For tho God do not deſpiſe the work of his own hands, have ſo much kindneſs to his

his Creatures, that he endeavors to reduce all our native inclinations to their primitive rectitude, and therefore does not abolish, but purifie them; yet Atheism is none of those, 'tis a counterblast from hell, in opposition to that mighty wind in which the holy spirit descended. Tho the subject in which it subsists may be reform'd, the person may turn Christian, and the wit that maintain'd its blasphemous paradoxes may be converted to holier uses: yet the quality it self is capable of no such happy Metamorphosis; that must be extirpated, for it cannot be made tributary. Which shews how transcendent an ill that is which cannot be converted to good, even that Omnipotence which can out of the very stones raise children to *Abraham*, attemts not any transmutation of this; which ought therefore to possess all hearts with a detestation of it, and to advance them in an earnest pursuit of all the parts of Piety.

12. AND that is it which I would now once more (as a farwell exhortation) commend to my female Readers, as that which vertually contains all other accomplishments; 'tis that pearl in the Gospel for which they may part with all and make a good bargain too. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*, saies the wisest of men, *Prov.* 1. 7. and by his experience he shews that it is the compleating end of it too; for he no sooner declin'd from that, but he grew to dotage and dishonor. Let all those therefore to whom God has dispenst an outward affluence, given them

them a visible splendor in the eies of the World, be careful to secure to themselves *that honor which comes from God only*, Joh. 5. 44. unite their souls to that supreme Majesty who is the fountain of true honor: who in his bestowing the Crown of righteousness proceeds by the same mesures by which he disposed the Crown of *Israel*, when he avow'd to *Samuel* that he *look't not on the outward appearance but beheld the heart*, Sam. 16. 7. If God see not his own Image there, all the beauty and gaiety of the outward form is despicable in his eies, like the apples of *Sodom* only a Kind of painted dust. But if Piety be firmly rooted there, they then become like the Kings daughter all *glorious within* too; a much more valuable bravery then the *garment of needle work and vesture of Gold*, Psalm. 45. 14. And this is it that must enter them into the Kings *Palace*, into that *new Jerusalem*, where they shall not wear, but inhabit *pearls* and Gems Rev. 21. 19. be beautiful without the help of art or nature, by the meer reflexion of the Divine brightness; be all that their then enlarg'd comprehensions can wish, and infinitly more then they can here imagine.

FINIS.

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